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THE BREACH OF PROMISE.

THE
BREACH OF PROMISE.
A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
“THE JILT;” “COUSIN GEOFFERY;” “THE MARRYING MAN;”
“THE MATCHMAKER;” &c., &c.

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THE BREACH OF PROMISE.

CHAPTER I.

POOR Mr. Abel Watchful! as he hurried along the gay and crowded streets, intent only on his own thoughts and fears—so neat, so dignified, so venerable in appearance, and yet without the slightest attempt at stepping out of his own station in his dress or manner—he looked a perfect specimen of the old servant of the last century; but no one would have guessed that

he was the valet of the most reckless, profligate, and hair-brained nobleman of the present day.

Abel, though he carefully concealed his age, lest it should be considered to render him unfit for service, and compel him to be pensioned off, away from one he had sworn never to forsake, was turned seventy, and his years were stamped, and legibly too, on his marked and faithful features. His once blue eyes were become grey and dim ; but to atone for what they wanted in brightness, they were ever restlessly looking about, lest any one should wrong, or injure, or ridicule the only being he loved and lived for, his young lord ! His silver hair was carefully powdered, his white cravat and frilled shirt were spotless, and in the latter was an oval mourning brooch, containing the black and the golden hair of his late lord and lady worn together in a little mat. Not a speck was to be seen on his black coat, his knee-breeches, his black silk stockings, or his shoes, that sent back the rays of the sun in a sort of sheaf, so brightly

were they polished ! A large gold watch-chain and seals, that had belonged to his first master, the grandfather of the present lord, descended in obsolete grandeur from his fob ; his own seal was an immense cornelian slab set in gold, on which A. W. were written in large letters, fair as his fame and legible as his character ; but he had a perfect collection of old seals, with coats of arms belonging to members of the Trelawney family, and one little delicate bloodstone signet, given him by his late lady in her days of courtship, with the simple word, 'Juliet,' her own sweet name.

His first master's cane, a sturdy gold-headed fellow, had been bequeathed to him, and propped his steps ; and the cuffs of the whitest of shirts peeped over his black silk gloves.

As Mr. Abel Watchful walked along, his thoughts were with the past. It was fifty years since, in the bloom and hope of twenty-two, he first came to London in the service of Lord Trelawney, grandfather of the present lord.

— “Ah,” thought he, with a sigh, “I was fleet of foot and light of heart then ; how beautiful, how wonderful I thought the scenes that now seem so gaudy, so noisy, and so wearisome ! But things *are* changed ; it is not merely that I am old— revolutions and radicals have shaken the world like a cup of wine, and the dregs mix with the froth. All people seem to me to look alike now. Where are the beautiful distinctions of rank ? No swords, no solitaires, no point lace and embroidered silks, or cut velvets, to mark the gentleman ; all crop-eared round-heads, and plain clothes ; the noble art of hair-dressing (which I was sent to Paris to study) of no avail !

Ladies and ladies’ maids, high and low, all drest in cheap silks or cheaper cottons, and straw bonnets. Oh, the days when ladies, in dresses that none but ladies could afford to wear, silks and satins that could stand alone, with heads, that it took the hair-dressers hours to dress, stepped in their high heels, towering (as they ought to do above the lower orders) into

their coaches and six ! Then a lady was something to look at—then it was something to ride in her own coach ; but now, every upstart gets a pair of rat-like horses, and lolls in a hired carriage.

It's all the same at the theatres ; I hate them, they're like bear-gardens, full of the lower orders, or the higher, lowering themselves to them. What a sight the dress-circle used to be ! what stately ladies, what nodding feathers, and dazzling jewels, and diamond snuff-boxes, and fans that freshened the scented air, and waved the beautiful plumes ! How much like Queens they sate, and how the gentlemen waited on and worshipped them—gentlemen that a lady might be proud to smile on—such a gentleman as none but a first-rate valet could 'turn out,' *then* it was something to have a fine taste, a good valet, and a good leg. Now lords and ladies sit together like lads and lassies at a country fair, cheek by jowl, any how—the ladies done up in shawls and looking like shop-girls—the gentle-

men booted and spurred and splashed—all, ‘hail fellow! and well met,’ with the daughters of those their fathers treated like Queens. It’s the ladies’ faults after all, they make themselves too cheap! Fancy my lord coming to my lady in his courting days, smelling of the stable; why, much as she loved him, she’d have given him his conjée, or my name isn’t Abel Watchful.

And the shops full of boast and trumpery—everything cheap and everything bad. The object used to be to be good; the object now is to *seem* so.”

“ FINE FRUITY OLD PORT, (he read with scorn) twenty-six shillings the dozen!” (fine old poison!) “ BEST CONGOU!” as he passed another shop, “ three shillings and nine-pence a pound! and upwards;” (yes, and *upwards!* there’s the roguery.) “ FINE MOCHA COFFEE, one shilling and three-pence,” and so on; and here, “ Best Paris Kid, eight-pence halfpenny a pair!” and not worth the odd halfpenny. And what’s that? oh, I see—“ The Patent

Funeral Omnibus!" with patent mourners—patent coffin, cheap, gaudy, and made to last a month. Well, I do hope I shall never be rumbled along the street to some patent burial ground in that irreverent manner.

"Twelve hours to Newcastle," he read on a railway advertisement. "Twelve hours! and it used to take my lord a week; and what's the end? Cocknies and pickpockets swarm everywhere—the railways cut the country to pieces—no place is secluded or sacred—there's no country now. Apprentices pic-nic now, where none but the great and their attendants could go. But I'm weary of it all! everything to me looks mean, and cheating, and boasting—all advertising and puffing—everything done by steam. It's time the old were swept from this new world—old limbs can't keep pace with steam."

"Ah, there's the house," he said, as he turned into St. James's Square; "how well I remember my first arrival there, behind the noble coach

drawn by six long-tailed black horses ; such horses are not to be had now for love or money !

“ Mrs. Comfit was a girl then—Lady Cecilia’s own maid, and a smart, flirting, enticing, dressy wench. She thought to play off the country lad, but he was a good scholar, brought up with his young master, and more than a match for her !—though he had never seen London before. She’d have had a chance though, if she hadn’t wanted to have two strings to her bow, and to play the young valet and the old butler (red-nosed Comfit) off against each other. But it wouldn’t do ; I saw her game and told her so, and in spite, she married Comfit.

“ Well, I’m glad of it—I’ve enough to do to see after my young lord—I don’t want a dozen children to provide for ; sons and daughters ain’t what they were ; instead of helping their old parents as I used to do, they live upon them ! all must be a sort of half-gentry, none know their stations. Why, what’s here ? surely

I hear music in the house! why, goodness gracious, surely there's dancing going on! why, that's my late blessed lady's own spinnet, and her guitar too, as sure as my name's Watchful. Now I shall come to words with Mrs. Comfit, and get my young lord to give her warning!"

So thinking, Abel stole gently down the area steps, and looked into the kitchen; no one was there, but a goose and two ducks were roasting before the fire, and there seemed other preparations for a feast. Abel passed stealthily by the housekeeper's room; the cloth was spread there for a dozen persons. Abel gave a sigh of relief and inexpressible comfort.

"Thank heaven," he said, "she's not going to feast her company in the dining-room nor to head the table where my lady used to preside. Oh, dear! dear! that is a relief to my mind; and it is not one of the best table cloths, no; and it's her own plate and china. I'm thankful for that. Why, I do think she's in her still-

room—I fancy I hear her snore ; if so, what can the noise up-stairs be ?”

Abel stole on tiptoe to the door opening into the still-room ; it was ajar, the upper half was glass, and a green curtain screened it ; but being partly drawn aside, Abel could look into the room.

In a high-backed arm-chair was a venerable looking old woman asleep. A towering muslin cap, trimmed with old lace (in the fashion of fifty years ago, the beau ideal of clear-starching), gave an additional height to her very tall and stately figure ; her silver hair, cut straight like a charity boy’s, was neatly combed over her furrowed forehead. Her dress was a rich and ample black lutestring, once Lady Trelawney’s—and its fashion unchanged. A white muslin handkerchief was neatly pinned across her venerable breast, and a large white worked muslin apron completed her attire. From her side hung a large bunch of keys, a pincushion shaped like a heart, and a large pair of scissors ;

her chair was placed so that no one could approach an iron safe containing plate and other valuables without disturbing her. Her thin hands, the age of which might be traced in their prominent joints and large projecting veins, were clasped, and on her knee lay a large fan, and a quaint worn silver snuff-box. She occasionally twitched and murmured in her sleep, now and then stamping an old shapeless foot in an antique quilted silk shoe, while she murmured, as if directing the servants: "For shame! a cobweb! Waste! waste! waste not, want not." And then in a meek tone, "Yes, my lady! Of course, my lady! Depend on me, my lord!"

"Poor old soul! she's guiltless! her very dreams are full of the departed," thought Abel; "but I'll fathom this. Deaf as a post, and blind as a bat, I've no doubt her children and grand-children take advantage of her to run riot all over the house. Well, I'm thankful I've none.

“And to think that silver-haired, stern-looking old dame was laughing, ogling, flirting Jenny Primrose ! It seems but yesterday I saw her first in this very room, standing behind the housekeeper’s chair ! old Mrs. Graves, her own aunt ! What a bright creature she looked ! her hair glossy and black as a raven’s wing, strained off her white smooth forehead, and a jaunty little cap and blue ribbons perched on the top ; the ribbons not more blue than the veins that seemed to try to hide themselves under the black hair ; and then her dark, saucy eyes, black as sloes, her cheek like a china rose, her scarlet lip and brilliant teeth, and the kerchief pinned so coquettishly over her white neck and fastened by a knot of blue ribbon ! And how her aunt used to frown, and hint, and nudge, and shake her head, if that kerchief didn’t sit quite as firm and close as her own. How pretty I thought Jenny in her chintz cotton roquelaire and her quilted petticoat, with her light foot and neat ankle ! And there she

is now—and here am I, almost as changed! and the old aunt who used to watch us so, she is dust long ago; we need no watching now! And red-nosed Comfit, who used to puff and blow and spite me so, long years since; and my beautiful lady! no sound of her light foot, her merry laugh, or her sweet song. She doesn't come to the stair-head to listen for my lord! And the boy she so loved and so begged me to watch over on her death-bed, what is he come to? Ah! there's the worst of all! and how can I help it—what can I do?"

Abel stole softly up-stairs. He looked into the dining-rooms. All was still, all stately, all in beautiful order; not a speck of dust on the old high-backed chairs and black mahogany tables; the Turkey carpet bright and soft as ever. The shutters were closed, but the door admitted a soft light, and Abel gently unfastened one shutter and admitted sufficient light for him to gaze on the full length portraits

of his late lord, taken in his naval uniform at five-and-twenty ; and his lady, according to the taste of the day, as a shepherdess, in white satin and a little scarlet jacket, her hair combed off her forehead, and hanging in a powdered fleece on one shoulder ; a little straw hat, and a crook crowned with flowers. It was, spite of the quaint attire, exquisitely painted by Reynolds, and the face equalled in feminine loveliness the manly beauty of his lordship.

Old Abel gazed at them till tears filled his eyes. “ Heaven rest their souls ! ” he said, reverently kissing the canvass ; and then turning to gaze on a bright picture of his young lord by Lawrence, as a lovely laughing boy, playing with a blood-hound ; and finally turning to two stiff portraits of his first master and mistress, the old Lord Trelawney, in a wig, hanging like two flaps of curls to his waist, and his lady, a severe dame in a hoop and a high powdered *toupé*.

“Would he were like either of them!” said the old man, glancing from the boy to his father and his grandfather; “but times are changed—there’s nothing now like it used to be! It’s time the old left this new world!”

CHAPTER II.

Full of these thoughts Abel stole up-stairs, and stood on the landing, listening at the door of the drawing-rooms ; the angry color mounted to his hale old cheeks, and he clenched his withered hands. In those rooms, sacred to the stately memory of his departed lady, he heard the sounds of vulgar mirth and riot ; nay, more unhallowed fingers were running over her spinnet, and touching her guitar. Abel could contain his wrath no longer, he opened the door, and stood among the revellers.

A party of ten or twelve were romping in the drawing-rooms. A woman of about five-and-forty, gaudily dressed, and whom he knew at a glance to be Mrs. Comfit's eldest married daughter, was strumming at the spinnet, she having in her youth been indulged with a '*finish*' at a boarding-school; her sister, a maiden about a year younger than herself, thrummed the old-fashioned guitar; a pretty blooming young girl, dressed all in white, with orange flowers in her hair, and a veil over her head, was waltzing to her mother's old tunes with a young dark-looking man, dressed in blue coat, gilt buttons, white waistcoat, and white ducks. And no one could doubt that he was the happy bridegroom of the fair and merry bride, who was vainly trying to teach him the Polka, when Abel entered. Two smart girls and their sweethearts, and two children playing on the floor, completed the party.

Abel went at once up to the dame at the spinnet, and said in a voice hoarse with passion:

“Pray, Mrs. Gubbins, may I know by what right you presume to touch that instrument, never opened to my knowledge, since my honoured lady closed it last?”

“Why, la, Mr. Abel,” said Mrs. Gubbins, “what ‘arm can I do it by playing a few toons for the young ones to dance to?”

“Every harm! It’s a disgrace to the house, to my lady’s memory, to Mrs. Comfit, to me! Dancing too! in my lady’s own drawing-rooms! Mrs. Comfit shall find, if she permits this, that this is no place for her! It’s a regular breach of trust, and so she shall find. What have you to do with that lute, ma’am? the lute my lord gave my lady when she married! Give it me this moment.”

“Lackadisy goodness gracious patience me!” said the maiden of forty-four, tossing back her long false ringlets, and turning up her pointed red nose! “why it’s the most obsolete old thing, of no good to nobody—I only tried it for fun!”

“ What’s fun to you is death to me, ma’am ! That ribbon my lord placed himself round my lady’s throat. Oh, these are fine doings ! and dancing those horrid foreign new dances, spoiling the furniture, disgracing the place that to me is as sacred as a church. Get up, you young scamps,” said old Abel, pulling up two boys who were on the floor playing with the sofa pillows.

Just at this moment a baby’s loud shrill scream was heard from up-stairs.

“ What, more of the family ? In my lady’s own room I suppose,” said old Abel, hurrying up-stairs as fast as his legs could carry him.

“ Touch my baby at your peril, you old killjoy !” shrieked Mrs. Gubbins. “ Of course I couldn’t come out for the day without the blessed babe !”

“ What an old wampire !” said her sister, Miss Comfit.

Old Abel rushed into the room that had been that of his lord and lady ; Mrs. Gubbins,

Miss Comfit, and all the others in procession followed him.

On the state bed, whose draperies were of crimson damask, and surmounted by the Trellawney coronet, lay two children of five and six years old, fast asleep; and in the little fanciful and costly cot where once the young heir was proudly cradled, a bundle, which proved to be a baby, almost black in the face with crying. It kicked and screamed. The mother caught it up, patting it, coaxing, dancing, and finally silencing its grief through the medium of its appetite.

Old Abel, when he saw this, to him, hallowed spot so desecrated, sate down, took out his handkerchief, and wept. All looked on in consternation and alarm.

“That was their bridal bed!” he said at length. “In that bed my young lord was born—in that bed my lord died—in that my lady died! Get up!” he cried, suddenly darting at the children; “how dare you!” He pulled

one off, the mother snatched away the other ; the frightened children roared, the baby screamed, Mrs. Gubbins cried, Miss Comfit scolded, the bride and bridegroom laughed and clung together, and in the confusion exchanged a kiss—and all joined more or less in the uproar, which became so loud that it roused even poor deaf Mrs. Comfit out of her sleep downstairs ; and up she came, the quaint old woman, like a spirit of the past, and leaning on an ivory headed staff.

“ What’s all this ?” she cried, hobbling upstairs. “ Robbers ! fire ! murder ! why are you all up-stairs ? why have you left my parlour ? where are you ? what are you doing here all of you ?”

“ Oh, Mr. Watchful,” cried Mrs. Gubbins, turning very pale, “ don’t make mischief for us ! she’ll never forgive us—turn us out on Jenny’s wedding day—cut me off with a shilling—do speak a kind word for us.”

“ Oh do, oh do !” cried all at once ; the

pretty bride coming up in all the confidence of her beauty and her bridehood, and taking his hand.

“ Do make some allowance for young people like us !” said the old maid.

“ Here she comes !” all cried at once.

“ What is this ?” said the old woman at first not perceiving Abel Watchful ; “ how dare you come up-stairs or enter this room—my lady’s room ? Where did you get the keys ? Down with you, down with you all, and out of the house. No wedding supper here to-night ! Away with you all—you deceitful, false, encroaching wretches—taking advantage of my infirmities—out of the house, I say, trespassers !”

“ Do let a body speak, mother,” bawled Mrs. Gubbins in her incensed parent’s ear.

“ Speak ! the thing speaks for itself. Away with you all !” And she flourished her staff like a witch on the stage. “ Not one sixpence, Mrs. Smith, need you expect for your wedding present, and I *had* put you up a fifty pound note.”

Mrs. Smith, the bride, began to cry, as did the bridegroom.

“As for you, daughters, I cut you both off with a shilling, and all your brats!”

Mrs. Gubbins and Miss Comfit fell on their knees.

“Why, good gracious, Mr. Abel Watchful, is that you? How did you come here? did you give 'em leave, sir? Oh, no, tisn't likely!”

“Oh do! do say yes!” sobbed Mrs. Gubbins. I'm ruined else, and Gubbins 'll break every bone in my skin for this day's work. It's my girl's wedding-day, and mother falling asleep, we meant no harm, just playing a little in the drawing-room, and putting the children here for the leastest bit of a nap, for their poor blessed little legs wouldn't carry 'em any longer.”

“Do make peace for us,” said the pretty bride, kissing with her soft warm lip the old man's hand.

Abel was not proof against this. Miss Comfit followed the bride's example.

Meantime old Mrs. Comfit, after shaking hands with Abel Watchful, had seated herself near him.

“Isn’t it a profanation?” said the old woman, “and can it be too severely punished, Mr. Abel?”

“Do you all swear,” asked Abel, in a low tone, “never to act thus again?”

“We do! we do!”

“Don’t they deserve all I have threatened?” said the old housekeeper.

“They do indeed,” replied the old man; “but Mrs. Comfit!” and he raised his voice for her to hear him, “those whom we served so long, and loved so well, and still revere so much—those for whom we hold all here sacred till my young lord takes possession—were ever more prone to *forgive* than to *punish*. In their name I beg you to overlook the great evil these giddy young people have committed in pro-

faning spots sacred to the memory of the great and good. They pledge themselves never so to sin again. I forgive them—do you the same? I ask it of you, for the sake of old times.”

“ Well, then, if you can pass it over I suppose I can, and must—I will forgive them on condition you stay and partake of the wedding supper. Get up, children, and never, never again attempt in this house to enter any rooms but mine. Let us restore everything to order.”

With her own hands she smoothed the bed and the cot. Old Abel hurried downstairs, and reverently wiping the keys of the spinnet, locked it, and took possession of the key; he did the same by the guitar, kissing the ribbon as a papist does a relic of a saint.

The rooms being restored to perfect order, the shutters closed, and the doors locked, old Abel, fondly caressed on one side by the pretty and thankful bride, and on the other by the forward Miss Comfit, was seated at the supper table.

The supper was excellent, the punch made by Abel was worthy of his skill. Old times were busy at his heart ; and though Miss Comfit did her best to charm him with what she considered her modern graces, and certainly having decided an old husband was better than none, encouraged him as much as might be to propose. He turned from her to talk with her mother of old times. His heart was with the past.

He preferred her old ballads—

“ ‘Twas down in the meadows one morning in May”—

and

“ At once I’m in love with two nymphs that are fair”—

which he had heard her sing fifty years before, to all the fashionable airs screeched by Miss Comfit ; and when the young people, by which terms he designated all under fifty, took to romps and forfeits, Abel asked Mrs. Comfit to give him a cup of tea in the still-room, where half a century before he had been allowed that

luxury by her old aunt, and in the presence of pretty Jenny.

They talked and talked of old times, and of those they had served so long and loved so well, till the clock striking twelve warned Abel to depart; and bitterly bewailing the old watchmen, in which regret he was heartily joined by Mrs. Comfit, (another worshipper of the Past) he took his way back to his master's abode in Pall Mall.

CHAPTER III.

It was the day fixed by Sir Felix Archer for the Temples to dine with him ; and as he was very anxious to impress them with his taste, liberality, and refinement, he was more than usually fidgetty, or what is vulgarly called *fussy*, in his long and frequent interviews with his butler, his housekeeper, and his valet. With him, however, it was *l'embarras des richesses*, the choice between different sets of china, different services of plate, different delicacies of every kind ; and in his own dress, a dozen dif-

ferent waistcoats were displayed, half-a-dozen dress coats extended before him by the voluble and obsequious valet, who, being French, pronounced them all *d'un gout parfait!* But in spite of all his wish to shine and to enjoy himself on this particular day, he felt unusually anxious, nervous, and depressed.

Renard Undermine had had an interview with Badger and Bright, solicitors, and though for his own purposes he choose to hold out some faint hopes to Sir Felix, and thus make himself of importance to his client, yet Badger and Bright were good men and true. To possess Felix Park themselves, they would not have done a mean or treacherous deed even by a foe, and for Sir Felix's nephew they had a warm and sincere regard, which made them more than professionally eager to see him righted, and this small share of his entailed property restored to him. They were not in possession of the address of Frank Stanley, and believed him to be abroad, so that they

could not take any decided steps in his cause, without his instructions.

But Renard Undermine clearly saw, that although till the nephew's return he might play upon Sir Felix's hopes and fears to suit his own purposes, that the case was clear as an Eastern moon, and that Sir Felix would not only be obliged on his nephew's return instantly to resign, but for the sake of his own character to do it with as little delay and as good a grace as possible. Sir Felix knew the land well, and he trembled; but he thought he knew lawyers better still, and his hopes rose. He judged by himself, by his father, by Twist, Twine, Turn, and Renard Undermine, senior and junior. It never struck him that there are great and good and honorable men, aye, moral men and christian men, more than the world wots of, even in a profession so peculiarly beset with temptations, and cursed with the facility of doing evil with impunity—and Badger and Bright were honest lawyers—as superior to a bribe as any

bishop on the bench. With such men Sir Felix Archer had not the shadow of a chance.

In spite of the delusive hopes Renard Undermine held out, the general impression left on Sir Felix Archer's mind was one of alarm and despondency—and he longed in the fascination of Lucilla Temple's society to forget his gloomy presentiment of evil and of loss. Urged by his restless hopes and fears, he had called late in the evening at the Undermines in Bedford Row. It was some little time before he was admitted, and then he was told that one of the young ladies only was at home, but that Mr. Renard was expected in every moment.

Sir Felix was shown into the library. Miss Lucilla Undermine was at her desk, writing with eager haste. The lamp which alone lighted the room, threw a soft light on her intellectual forehead, from which the dark masses of dishevelled hair were pushed wildly back.

She did not seem aware of the entrance of any one, but when the servant announced Sir

Felix Archer, she uttered a little cry of surprise and joy, and rose to welcome him with the soft *empressement* which she had perceived he liked so well.

“I was with you in spirit, Sir Felix,” she said, pointing to the ‘Essay on Taste;’ “I had just completed one notice of this sublime masterpiece, and commenced another.”

“Thank you, my fair and gifted friend,” he replied, taking her hand. “Oh that all felt as kindly by me as you do!” And at the thought of the world’s neglect of his Essay, and the chance of losing Felix Park, a tear positively softened his fine eyes.

“You are in sorrow,” cried the lady, clasping his hand in both hers; “you look pale! Oh, heavens! there is a tear in those eyes! How beautiful is grief in a face where the features are perfect and the expression sublime. I can now understand the poet’s rapture about ‘smiles still lovelier than tears.’”

“Fair young enthusiast!” said Sir Felix, “he

who has such a friend ought to defy sorrow.” But as he spoke, he was so excited by the lady’s rapture and his own touching merits, added to his recent agitation about Felix Park, that he positively did weep. He who had not wept for years—no, not since his last caning at school, we will not say how long ago.

“ Oh, do not, do not give way. What can you covet? What can you desire? You to whom all so love, so glory to minister to!” And she put her handkerchief to her eyes.

“ I am weak, my sweet friend,” said Sir Felix, “ and you know that my state of mind at present is even in its happiness allied rather to tears than smiles.”

“ Nay, nay, you can have no doubts, no fears.”

“ Why no?” said Sir Felix, with the most artificial of smiles. “ Scarcely, fair friend, in the common sense of the word; but it is astonishing what an ingenious self-tormentor I am—As you so sweetly hint I cannot well fear re-

jection, I am not stretched like most suitors on the rack of jealousy, but as I look forward I ask myself whether my present interest in a certain fair one will last. I try to divest her of the halo love throws round her, and to ascertain whether when, as the poet says, ‘Custom comes with its inevitable curse’—whether I may not wish I had still the power to select, and the right to rove. What say you, fair casuist ?”

“I am no fair judge ; I can never think any one worthy of you ?”

“I must not accustom myself to the luxury of your intellectual converse, my friend !” said Sir Felix, “or I shall really be spoilt for all less gifted women.”

Sir Felix did not perceive that flattery of himself formed the charm of the lady’s converse.

“What think you of her ?” he added ; “can she love ?”

“ Oh, if she loves not you, whom could she love ?”

“ You evade, fair one ! That she loves me as well as she *can* love I doubt not, but what depth of passion and tenderness is there in her nature ?”

“ I must see you together again before I answer that.”

“ You shall, you shall see us often.”

Miss Lucilla Undermine had a specific object, she was not to be put off by so vague and general a promise. She had heard of Sir Felix’s dinner party, and had set her heart upon being there. Renard also had resolved to go.

“ The Temples dine with you to-morrow !” said the young lady.

“ They do—a small family party.”

“ It is just in such a party a woman’s heart reveals itself the most. Your poor friend must be there to study the feelings of the happiest and most honoured of women.”

“ Confound it,” *thought* Sir Felix ; but he

said, for he was a gentleman—"may I indeed hope for an honour, I had scarcely ventured to request—and your papa and mamma——"

"Oh by no means, I am not going to crowd your tables or impose on your politeness. Renard will be a sufficient chaperon, for me."

"Well," thought Sir Felix, "she's presentable enough, and keeps me in spirits, and it will not do to slight or offend Renard. I must make the best of it, and submit with a good grace."

"I cannot tell you," he said, with well assumed animation, "how much your presence will enliven this little party. I had scarcely dared to ask it, because I had an impression, I scarce know why, that your family and the Temples were not quite on good terms."

"Oh quite! There *was* a coldness, but that is past. My intimacy with Lucilla compels them to be friends. And now let me read you

my last notice of your Essay. I cannot satisfy myself—I want a little encouragement!"

The praises of his genius, conveyed in flowing language, and read by a handsome girl, who seemed to think him perfection, naturally put Sir Felix into a good humour with himself and her. When she had done, he took her hand, and slipping an emerald ring, set in diamonds, off his own finger, with playful gallantry he placed it on her's, saying: "I hope you will always wear it for my sake; yes, even when some happy man has a right to place a dearer and holier ring on that fair finger."

He kissed her hand as he spoke, and at that moment Renard Undermine entered, with the servant carrying lights and his desk.

Lucilla hastily withdrew her hand, but the sparkle of her stones caught Renard's eye, and he took the first opportunity of exchanging a meaning glance with his sister.

Sir Felix then gracefully asked Renard to escort his "fair friend" to his house the next

day, and to oblige him with his company to a family dinner. A little conversation on business ensued, and then Sir Felix, observing to Renard that he wished to show him some papers connected with the discussion, invited him to sup with him. Renard rose to fetch his hat, and Sir Felix, taking a paper from his pocket-book, said:—

“Poetry is not my forte, my fair and dear confidante, but you know it is, and ever will be the soft interpreter of passion. I wish these lines to meet the eye of her who inspired them. I would not object to their being a little retouched and remodelled by a more gifted hand than mine. I do not like to commit myself by formally offering or sending them, and I have a foolish wish to know whether the object of them guesses their author, and, in short, admires them. I think I can trust all these delicate manœuvres in that fair hand; and now I must say *à demain*.”

“I shall count the hours till I see you again,”

said Lucilla Undermine, bowing with a reverence tinged with tenderness as she shook his offered hand: "And I will do my poor best to serve you in every way."

"Good-night, darling sister," said Renard; "when they all come from the play, tell them I should have joined them but for our dear friend here."

Our dear friend here! Sir Felix winced, but said: "And why were you not of the party, fair friend?"

"This," she said, touching the *Essay on Taste*, "interests me more than any play. Good-night."

"Farewell," said Sir Felix, while Renard walked to the window; "do not forget my commission."

"Forget! I would die to serve you—adieu!"

They are gone—Lucilla listens a moment for the rolling wheels, then darts across the room,

and unlocks a book closet, and out springs no less a person than Rory O'Brien.

“Ochhone, it’s myself is half dead with the hate and the cramp,” he said. “Och, the old cob, I thought he’d never have done ! And so mavourneen you’d die to serve him ? the old coxcomb ! You’ll live ma cuishla to serve him out !”

“ Didn’t I act my part well, Rory ?”

“ Didn’t you ? You’re the world’s wonther, and the darlin of the airth you are. But come, the moon’s almost as bright as your face, and they won’t be home these three hours yet, so let’s just slip out and walk in the square, and talk matters over a bit. The young May-moon is shining, love.”

“ Oh, Rory, I’m afraid.”

“ Afraid ! the girl that loves Rory O’Brien must know no fear.”

“ Save that of losing him,” said Lucilla Undermine, tenderly.

“ Och, niver fear, if you were to lose me,

I'd soon '*find myself*.' I'm used to that—so come, put on your bonnet that the saucy stars mayn't be winking at you ; I'm as jealous as Otello. Come, 'There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream.' ”

So saying, Rory offered his arm and the clandestine lovers noiselessly glided down stairs and out into the street, and Lucilla having a key of the Square they were soon safe from all remarks and censures, save those of Lucilla's own conscience, which was not quite so hardened as not to reproach her and prick her a little for the double part she was so adroitly playing, both with her parents, her brothers and sisters, Sir Felix Archer, and, as she thought, Rory O'Brien. But he was too deep for her.

Two young lovers gliding by moonlight among the dark shrubs, and over the silvery lawns—now sitting fondly hand in hand—now moving lovingly and slowly along, watched only by the stars—how much of poetry and

passion does one connect with them. But what had poetry and passion to do with the false, plotting Lucilla Undermine and the Irish fortune-hunter, Rory O'Brien?

CHAPTER IV.

The poor Temples ! What management did it require in them and what labour did it give them to act a respectable figure at a dinner party ; they with little more than the poor profits of a curacy, to be obliged to betray little outward difference between themselves and the possessors of annual thousands. But they were high in hope, for it was the eve of that important day on which Mr. Temple was to wait on Lord Lofty. It was probably the last day of “danger and distress”—the last day of

minute and trembling economy—the last day of terrible fear for the Future—the last day perhaps that Mr. Temple must deny himself the luxury of doing good.

Oh, the comfort, the delight, to that good and long-suffering man, of a certainty of competence for himself, and those so dear! The exquisite happiness too of being able liberally to assist those wretched ones of his large, his hungry, and his ragged flock—whom he had hitherto so stinted himself to benefit but a little! So little, as far as their bodily miseries went, but of spiritual comfort he had been no niggard. If he had little else to give, he gave, and lavishly, his time, his health, his energies, his very life; but often he felt that the cravings of the vile body must be supplied before man would care for his immortal soul.

When in the low dens of despair and guilt, (children of poverty) he tried to teach the lean and wolf-eyed little ones not to steal, a haggard mother, with a skeleton babe at a breast that

“yielded no relief,” has almost shrieked, “No, no! The minister’s right; it’s a sin to steal, but it’s no sin to starve!” And a jaundiced unshorn man, too ill to work, has growled: “Let me starve, I only wish it was over, I can’t bear to see it, and as to the Union, I’d rather die here, for here I have *her* beside me, and I can see *them*! and there I should die like a dog.”

Scenes like these were rife in the little courts and alleys that abounded in his parish. The Incumbent was on the Continent, and poor Temple had the sole charge of a poor and populous district. True there were Union workhouses, and hospitals, and public charities for all, but what Mr. Temple so sighed for, was the power of relieving the wretched without breaking up their homes and their hearts, and wounding their spirits and embittering their bread. And now, if Lord Lofty either procures him a living or a lucrative appointment—

how many a case he has vainly wept over, he will effectually relieve.

There had been great difficulties to be overcome to make all presentable, and the Temples had been obliged to ask credit, as a favour of vulgar and suspicious shopkeepers ; some had rudely refused, some had civilly declined, but at last some had agreed to furnish what was necessary at credit price, and thus this dinner involved the Temples in a debt, a nothing if their prospects are realized, but heavy and alarming should Lord Lofty disappoint them.

“ That is not at all likely,” said the still sanguine Mr. Temple, as he insisted on his wife’s selecting a handsome grey satin for her dress on the important occasion, instead of the miserably poor and tolerably cheap dark silk she had meekly fixed upon, as being less of an outlay, and fit for many uses.

“ The satin is so dear, my love,” whispered Mrs. Temple anxiously to her husband, as the pert shopman unfolded it in a true haber-

dasher's most dashing style—"besides it will not turn."

"Why certainly, mem," said the haberdasher, who had overheard her, "it would be a novel thing to turn a satin—quite a horiginal idear—you'd have the honour of setting the fashion, mem! but just compare the harticles—allow me—oblige me, sir—I'm sure you won't hesitate when you see them together."

"They do look very different certainly," said Mr. Temple; "my dear, you must have the satin."

"It is so very dear," replied Mrs. Temple, deprecatingly.

"Dear! mem!" interposed the haberdasher, "we're selling it at cost price—positively cost price, because we wish to clear off the stock; the original price of this harticle, mem, was eight-and-six, and now I only ask you seven-and-nine."

"If it would but turn!" again whispered Mrs. Temple.

“ Why, mem, if you’re so economically disposed, it will dye, dye equal to new! only seven-and-nine! it’s giving it away.”

“ Why, so it will! it will dye! I had not thought of that.”

“ Well, then, my love, as the young man so recommends it,” said the simple and unsuspecting Temple, “ and it does seem a great bargain, having been so much reduced you see, let me decide for you. Twelve yards, my love, did you not want twelve?”

“ I think eleven would do,” faltered Mrs. Temple, frightened when she saw so much expensive satin unfolded with a jerk for *her*.

“ Twelve is the shortest quantity, mem, we ever sell for a dress; but as you please.”

“ Oh, do have enough, my dear,” said Mr. Temple; “ In a few weeks,” he whispered fondly in her ear, “ as a Rector’s lady you will want not merely one dress, but a whole wardrobe—and do have it handsome!”

The whisper was low, but the haberdasher

had very large, quick ears ; he caught enough to supply him with the meaning, and his manner gradually became much less abrupt, and more coaxing and confidential.

“ What’s the next article, mem ? ”

“ Nothing more, thank you,” said Mrs. Temple, anxious to get out of the shop.

But before she could remove, the counter was covered, as if by magic, with long white paper boxes, edged with blue, and full of gloves, silk stockings, ribbons, and artificial flowers.

“ These gloves, sir, a first-rate article, best quality, and lowest price ; allow me to put up a dozen pairs.”

“ Oh dear no,” said Mrs. Temple in alarm, “ one pair, or if you like two, as Lucilla will want a pair.”

“ Only two pairs, mem ? let me say half-a-dozen, mem. There’ll not be a pair left by this time to-morrow. To tell you the truth, they are part of a bankrupt’s stock, or I couldn’t sell them for the money.”

“A bankrupt?” said Mr. Temple; “poor man, I do not like buying his goods under price.”

“Fraudulent bankruptcy, sir; all snug, took care of number one!”

“Nay, then,” said Mr. Temple, “I will not buy them at all! I wish to pay an honest price for an article honestly obtained—put them away. This system of underselling ruins trade and tradesmen.”

The young man was caught in his own net; he tried to unsay what he had said, he proved himself a liar, he ate his words, but all in vain—Mr. Temple would have nothing to do with the gloves.

The haberdasher turned aside and took an opportunity of putting his tongue in his cheek—of pointing over his left shoulder, and of whispering in his partner’s ear the expressive word ‘Walker.’ But the gloves were still his own; however he produced other packets, and now distrusting his powers of invention, he sold gloves for all the party. He contrived too to

tempt Mr. Temple with a very elegant light evening shawl for his wife, and a wreath for Lucilla.

“ Anything in the cap or turban line, mem? Our show-room is on the other side—my wife’s concern—this way, if you please, mem—do allow her the honour of showing you her assortment; the most tasteful articles at the lowest prices; as I supply her at cost price, she can afford to do it.”

“ Of course that must make a difference, my love,” said Mr. Temple; “ let us look at the caps; you said you wanted one.”

“ But I meant to make it myself.”

“ No, no, I wish you to look your best.”

“ Mrs. Crimp,” said the haberdasher, “ show the lady some caps, turbans, turban caps, etcetera.”

Mrs. Crimp, a little dandizette, with the most fanciful of French caps stuck at the back of her head, was not at all inferior to her husband in powers of persuasion and puffing, but added

thereto a great deal of direct flattery suitable to her craft.

“ Will you try this blonde cap with the blue flowers, ma’am ?”

“ Blue is such a trying colour.”

“ To most ladies, ma’am ; but not to you your complexion will stand any colour, ma’am.”

“ Ah, but I am generally very pale.”

“ Oh, but that’s so aristocratic, ma’am—it’s not to be regretted—the lily above the rose at any time; and with such hair, ma’am. Woman’s greatest ornament is her hair. It sets a cap off, do fine hair.”

“ The cap ought to set the hair off, I think,” said Mr. Temple.

“ A becoming cap do, sir ; they mutually accommodate each other.”

“ Try that turban, my love,” said Mr. Temple, pointing to one of silver lama, tastefully made up.

“ Ah, sir, you gentlemen have such a taste ! There’s not a sweeter thing in London than that turban.”

The turban was very becoming to Mrs. Temple's still beautiful face.

It was forty shillings.

Mrs. Temple demurred; Mrs. Crimp declared forty shillings could not be better spent, and in order to show it off she put it on her own mean plebeian head, a manœuvre that very nearly put the Temples out of conceit with it.

When it was packed up, Mrs. Crimp asked where she should have the pleasure of sending it. Mr. Temple gave the address, and was about to depart, when Mrs. Crimp having hastily written in pencil on a shop bill—

“To one silver lama turban, £2. 0s. 0d.”—

she presented the bill.

“I have arranged with Mr. Crimp to pay him in three months,” said Mr. Temple.

“This is a different concern, sir,” simpered the milliner; “we charge ready-money prices, my principle being small profits and quick returns; forty shillings is such a trifle for such

a turban, sir ! the silver lama is worth more, to say nothing of the work, style, fittings up, &c. &c.—allow me to receipt the bill, sir !”

Mrs. Temple turned pale, and her husband red. She pressed his arm and whispered, “I will not have it.”

“You must, you must now,” said Mr. Temple, as with an authoritative dash Mrs. Crimp put the receipted bill into his hand.

Mr. Temple took out two sovereigns—alas ! all he had, expect a few shillings ; Mrs. Temple’s heart sunk within her.

The milliner was all thanks, courtesies, and professions of her own merits, and devotion to her business and her customers.

At length they are in the street.

“Dearest, how could you be so extravagant ? We could not afford that satin or that turban.”

“We can afford nothing yet, but that I hope will not be the case long. I must see my Matilda once more dressed (as she always was, till I linked her with poverty and grief) in the

best and most tasteful of attire. Come, Sir Felix will not be ashamed of us. I think it will puzzle him to match the matron beauty of my wife, and the girlish charms of my daughter. This is the first handsome dress I have bought you for years, my darling, my unrepining, blessed darling!—you who, as Matilda Thornhill, were the observed of all observers—the setter of fashions rather than their follower. Think not the sweet contentedness and resignation of years have been lost on your husband. No, he feels high in hope that he will be able to atone—he can never reward you.”

Tom had been allowed to consult his own taste, and his parents saw with regret that he had availed himself of the licence to order the tailor to make him a dress-coat instead of a jacket. A boy always looks mean when first he dons the modern *toga virilis*; from a fine boy as he seems in his jacket, he slinks into a small insignificant man. Tom’s coat was a light

claret, with silver buttons ; a gay waistcoat and white ducks completed Tom's attire.

Mr. Temple, in a new black suit, looked the perfection of a gentleman and clergyman, and Lucilla and her mother surpassed even his expectations. The rich grey satin, silver turban, and blonde shawl of the latter were as well suited to her, as the white rose-wreath and tunic dress of white gauze over white silk to Lucilla.

Mr. Temple was in high spirits ; and when he was glad, it was not in his wife's nature to repine. Tom seemed to tread on air, which he did indeed, all but the tip of his toe and heel, for he had donned the torturing wellingtons, which had been nominally stretched, but were agony still.

Sir Felix sent his carriage to convey them—a kind and considerate attention, and a great convenience. With it came an exquisite bouquet for Lucilla, and one for Mrs. Temple. Sweet Lucilla, as she stepped upstairs, crowned

with roses and her flowers in her hand, glad in her parents' joy, and having inherited all their power of hoping—one felt that Di Moricini could not have chosen a fitter personification of Psyche, goddess of youth—"soul in her eyes, and love upon her lips."

Tom was rather cross, but then he was in pain. As Lucilla said, no philosopher could stand the test of a tight high-heeled boot, but added archly, "no philosopher but Tom would subject himself to their torture."

CHAPTER V.

The party assembled to meet the poor Temples was small but select. The elegant drawing-rooms seemed to have assumed new beauties for the occasion ; as if in compliment to Lucilla, whose taste for flowers was well known to Sir Felix, the rooms were abundantly decorated with the choicest bouquets and most fragrant shrubs, and a white moss-rose bud, which he always declared to be her badge, figured in his tasteful, well-fitting coat, fresh from Stulz.

There was a ferocious looking old Dowager

Marchioness, who looked at first sight startlingly unnatural, and no wonder, for eye-brows, hair, teeth, complexion, and figure, all were artificial; but the brilliants glistening in her jet black wig, and forming a tiara on her whitened forehead, they were real—so were all the gems, of which she had a galaxy—and yet her noble and card-playing coterie hinted that she wanted “one more jewel.”

She was naturally haughty and imperious, and had been a beauty in days when Beauty’s great pride was to conquer, not to win. At the house of a commoner she was generally either mortifyingly proud, or as mortifyingly condescending; but she was at once fond of money, of good living, and of play. Her bon-vivant and epicure propensities were never better suited than at the table of Sir Felix Archer. Since she had begun to hoard, she had liked to dine out, and having relinquished the giving of expensive dinner-parties, she did not find invitations among her own circle of the

élite so rife as of yore. She, therefore, proudly condescended, and prided herself on that condescension, and accepted invitations from some wealthy commoners who had French cooks. Indeed in her inmost heart she liked to grace their dinner-parties, for the stingy old Dowager, who was not much esteemed among her sister Marchionesses, &c. &c., was an object of pride, reverence, and a sort of idolatry among tuft-hunting parvenus, who thought themselves amply repaid for all their trouble and expense, and her hauteur and scorn, by being able to invite people to meet the Dowager Marchioness of Hauteville, and being able to dilate afterwards on what her ladyship had said and done.

Mrs. Temple of Temple Grove, her husband, and three of her daughters, in their everlasting green satins, and green feathers waving in their elaborately curled auburn hair, (in two instances auburn by courtesy) were among the guests.

Then came Lord Derrynane—a bald old

Irish gentleman, who from an impediment in his speech was quite unintelligible, but who prosed eternally, and bored any one hapless enough to be placed near him (if a lady, almost into hysterics—if a man, into a dogged despair.) No one understood him, but every one understood he was a lord, and so he never dined at his club ; home he had none.

He brought with him two sons, heavy uninteresting men, the Hon. Miles Sansterre, and the Hon. Phelim Sansterre ; their sole object in life was to barter their Hon. for a plum, or at least as near an approach to it as they could meet with ; but they had a powerful rival in their own papa, who being a widower, was also on the look-out, and had the advantage of being able to make *his* heiress Lady Derrynane, while the sons would only make theirs the Hon. Mrs. Sansterre and the Hon. Mrs. Phelim Sansterre ; in other respects there was not, as the vulgar say, a pin to chuse between them. The father was of course older in years, but in heart they

were all the same age ; they had but one idea, the sordid one of turning their little distinction of rank to account ; they looked upon *that* as their charm, their virtue, their accomplishment, their stock-in-trade. They saw wit, personal advantages, real merit, yield before it, and first-rate men slighted by silly girls, who wished in telling over their partners after a ball, to reckon a lord, though he *was* an old lord with a hollow roof, a more hollow head, and still more hollow heart, and two Honourables, though, except in name, they were a disgrace to their taste.

A handsome widow of about eight-and-twenty, a Mrs. Maltstone, whose husband, a great brewer, had left her five thousand a-year, was the object of attraction with both father and sons. She was a pleasant sprightly creature, and found it so pleasant to be an idol, that she had as yet no great desire to be again a wife. Her dominion was however unexpectedly divided with two very pretty girls, each having fifty thousand pounds by way of tocher, who came with their

papa, an old M. P., a Mr. Ogle, whose red bottle nose and purple cheeks, jovial manner, and courtly carriage of a pursy form, betrayed him to have been of those days when Bacchus was indeed a God, before whom sooner or later all fell *prostrate*.

Then came a brace of foreigners, with long names, long moustachios, long noses, long hair, very short purses, and many orders. The one was a German Baron—Von Holstein Von Rheinberger—a tall, thin, rather handsome man, but evidently made up, his whiskers and moustachios being of so artificial a black, his cheek so brightly pink, his lips so scarlet, and his figure so pinched in, and padded out! Around his neck he wore a broad scarlet ribbon, to which an order of some kind was attached, and several others glittered on his breast. He spoke many languages, fluently but not very correctly, and when he took off his white kid gloves, his hands were not the thorough-bred and nicely kept hands of an English gentleman; but then he

was only a foreign nobleman. He had many rings, but in the cheaper article of soap he had sadly stinted himself. His conversation was a rapid succession of boasts and compliments, and little ejaculations ; but there was a *naiveté*, a joyousness, and a wish to please about him which made one kind to him, and contrasted favorably, at least so the rich widow seemed to think, with the dull Lord Derrynane, and his duller sons.

The other foreigner was an Italian Marquis, at least so he said—Il Marchese di Terraincognita. He was very short and Jewish-looking, with a very long face, which was even lengthened by a pointed beard. He was more silent and less at his ease than the Baron, and had a suspicious, watchful glance ; he too wore orders, and ribbons, and glanced tenderly at all the ladies, even the ferocious old Marchioness, whom he fancied '*immensément riche.*' However he was a foreigner and a Marchese, and so the Miss Ogles smiled and chatted, and he

soon got into a flirtation with both, in that soft and silent manner a foreigner only can.

Renard Undermine and his sister arrived a few minutes after our party. Renard looked pert and professional, but Lucilla Undermine had dressed herself with consummate taste, and she had never looked so handsome or so lady-like ; her sleek black hair was dressed à la Duvernay, and a few tasteful Marabou feathers of gold colour and white waved like a helmet plume over one shoulder ; her dress was a gold-coloured satin, tastefully trimmed with blonde. We have said she was handsome ; but on the present occasion many feelings are busy at her heart, many plots fuse and simmer in her head ; her plump cheeks are in consequence almost pale, and her usually flashing eyes are full of thought and passion. Sir Felix looks at her with surprise, and the Marchioness of Hauteville, who thinks she bears a faint resemblance to her august self, says, pointing her out to Sir Felix :—

“Who’s that rather a stylish girl? what’s her name?”

Sir Felix coloured as he said, “Miss Undermine.”

“Undermine! what a curious, ominous name,” sneered her Ladyship; “well, she’s a pretty person, much prettier than that blonde, with all those ringlets; I hate blondes, and I detest ringlets!”

The Marchioness was a brunette, and her hair never would curl.

Sir Felix, like most men, was much influenced by the opinion of others, and the opinion of a Marchioness was all-important to him. Lucilla Undermine, after this, more than once was honoured by a glance and even a smile. But though the Marchioness was the lady of the highest rank of the party, Lucilla Temple felt she was in reality its Queen; and she blamed herself for the flutter of pride and pleasure she felt at seeing that elegant host to whom all were so courteous, treating her, the step-child

of Fortune, the daily teacher of Miss Trueblue the clothier's daughter, as if she were a younger and a fairer Marchioness. Though obliged by etiquette to lead the Dowager Lady Hauteville in to dinner, Sir Felix contrived to have Lucilla so placed that he could gaze at her and occasionally hear her voice, and whenever Lucilla looked towards him she saw that his eyes were fixed on her with a kind of restless passion. He was evidently not in his usual spirits, though he made a great effort to conceal his dejection. Lucilla feared she was the cause of his distress, but it was the thought of Felix Park that troubled him; for of her delighted acceptance he could scarcely permit himself to doubt. It grieved him, as he looked at her, to think that perhaps she might never do the honours of that exquisite place, but that was all she had to do with his sorrow.

The dinner passed as most great dinners do, the dishes were more piquant than the conversation, and the wine more sparkling than the wit.

The dinner service was magnificent—the dinner the greatest triumph of a first-rate ‘artiste.’

Mrs. Temple, who for years had not attended a dinner party, felt her spirits rise, particularly when gazing at her husband, her soft dark eyes sparkling through tears ; she saw him in the sphere he was born to move in, looking in her wife-like estimation so far above all the other men around him—listened to, admired, appreciated—his friend and cousin Temple, of Temple Grove, hanging on his words, and even the old Marchioness pausing to ask, “Who is that elegant and handsome man?” Then stole over her heart the hope that the morrow was to realize ; and even at that table that heart sent up its meek tribute of praise and gratitude to the Giver of all good. In the buzz of conversation which mingled with the clatter of glasses, plates, knives, &c. &c., a listener could occasionally catch the words—Grisi—“La Blache”—Cerito—Adèle Dumilâtre—‘Guy Stephan’—Sir Robert Peel—the Income Tax—“Punch”

—the Quarterly—the Queen—Longchamps—Flounces—the Surplice, the Offertory—and an ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu! quel tapage pour si peu de chose! s'il était question d'une mode pour une jolie personne, à la bonheur! Mais surplice ou non surplice qu'estce que cela fait—offertoire ou non c'est égal—Il faut toujours donner aux pauvres—n'estcepas? from the Baron—and soon, and “Ah, Mademoiselle, est trop bonne—vous me ferez veiller et pleurer en pensant a une honté si angelique une beautie aussi rare!” and similar rhapsodies from the Marchese di Terraincognita.

Lucilla Undermine, seated by the Hon. Mr. Phelim Sansterre, who took little notice of her, watched with growing envy the devotion of Sir Felix to the young and guileless Lucilla Temple, whose thoughts were now far away from this gorgeous scene, in the cool and quiet *atelier* of the poor artist; and Hebe Temple, the youngest of the ‘Evergreens,’ the only woman in the world who really loved Sir Felix Archer,

thought she would rather be to him what her cousin was, than be on the throne of the world without him. Her mother, Mrs. Temple, of Temple Grove, was in a very ill humour, and her sisters tossed their green plumes in vain, for no one heeded them. They were some of the unfortunate and abundant population of English young ladies, without dowries, who having no very peculiar charm, talent, or advantage, where hundreds of others of the same class are destined from their cradles to joyless old maidenhood, pass the rosy hours of youth in neglect and anxiety, fluctuating hopes, and horrible fears—often reproached and taunted at home, and generally slighted and wounded abroad, falsifying the old proverb about Joe and Jill, and in themselves living witnesses of the untruth of the distich :

“There’s no grey goose that flies but, soon or late,
Will find some stupid gander for her mate.”

Disproving the general opinion that every

woman has one offer at least in her life, and seeing years go by and premature grey hairs and wrinkles come, and too often asking themselves the sad question, why was I born? The immense overplus of unmated young ladies of this generation must, alas! fill the next with a preponderance of that desolate race—penniless old maids!

Tom, however, was seated between two of the Miss Temples, of Temple Grove; and Tom, if he did not amuse them, at least kept them alive. He helped himself most liberally, and was no bad pioneer of the table for them—his boasts amused them, and before dinner was over, they knew all his hopes both about his papa's preferment and the pawn-broker's pistol, Sir Felix and Lucilla; and, in short, being adepts in pumping, and Tom overflowing with news, they were in possession of every thing the poor Temples would most have disliked their hearing.

But if there is a secret in a family, a boy will find it out and let it out too.

While the gentlemen discussed politics in the drawing-room, the ladies discussed the politicians, sipped their coffee, praised each other's dresses where they were intimate enough, and criticised those of ladies to whom they were strangers. The Marchioness deigned to exchange a few syllables with Mrs. Temple, of Temple Grove, who, disdainful as she was with those she thought beneath her, was seated on a low chair by the couch on which the Marchioness sate—the former in a sort of obsequious ecstacy, the latter in a kind of august torpor, varied by little condescending smiles, when Mrs. Temple, of Temple Grove, placed an ottoman under her Ladyship's feet, picked up her fan, gazed at her with reverential rapture, and did all she could to shew at once her admiration and her meanness.

Miss Undermine was doing all she could to win Lucilla's confidence, now coaxing and flat-

tering, now joking with her about Sir Felix, and anon throwing out hints that he was a general lover, and had latterly become very marked in his attentions to herself.

“I have,” she said, “a copy of verses which I have reason to believe are written by him ; how I became possessed of them matters not ; they are simply headed “To Lucilla ;” we will read them together, dearest, and as two heads are better than one, we shall perhaps between us be able to make out to whom they are addressed.”

“Oh, if there is any doubt, pray take the benefit of it.”

“Not I, I only joke, of course they are meant for you, but come into that little quiet room, and we will read them.” Lucilla Temple felt some curiosity to see them, and so she rose ; but first she placed H. B.’s caricatures before her mother, and whispered in her ear—“I shall be with you again directly, darling mother.”

The fact was she had so seldom enjoyed a party with that dear mother, that to her the

chief delight of the evening was to sit by her side, to look at her in her elegant satin, to admire her matronly beauty, and with her to enjoy all that was beautiful, both animate and inanimate, and laugh over all that was ridiculous or absurd.

The two Lucillas glided arm-in-arm into a little boudoir half full of shrubs, and Miss Undermine having led her beautiful and envied companion to a sofa behind the door, took a paper out of her tiny reticule, and her companion looking over her, she read.

“ TO LUCILLA.

Daughter of Genius ! Pride of Albion’s Isle,
Once more fond Felix woos thy roseate smile ;
Once more, proud priestess of Diana’s power,
Venus invites thee to her myrtle bower.
Say, lovely rebel, to her sovereign will
Shall I be blest or doom’d to languish still ;
Say, with those ripened beauties which impart
The fondest wishes to the coldest heart ;

That eye so darkly bright, that soft brown hair,
Braided in beauty o'er a brow so fair ;
That Juno form, that ever dimpling smile,
That heart so warm, that wit so free from guile—
Say, shall such charms as these, too cruel maid,
In single blessedness be doomed to fade ?
Tell me, thou fair enchantress, is it so ?
Those lips say 'Yes'—those beaming eyes say 'No.'
Well, then, bright eyes ! fair mirrors of the soul,
Thy power alone, can my fond heart control.
There is a God, my lovely one, above,
The evanescent, winged God of love ;
His robe is saffron, everlasting flowers
And brilliant evergreens bedeck his bowers ;
He has no wings to quench his torch's flame—
Say, lovely tyrant, can you guess his name ?
And having guessed, wilt come with all thy charms,
Thy maiden blushes, and thy wild alarms,
And hide them in thy Felix's fond arms.

F. A."

Miss Undermine read with as much gravity
as she could command, and Lucilla Temple
tried to emulate her decorum, but her sense of

the ludicrous got the better of her, and she burst into a fit of irrepressible laughter.

“ Oh, it is evidently meant for you,” she said to Miss Undermine, “ and I should say it is nothing more nor less than an offer of marriage.”

“ Nonsense,” said Miss Undermine, “ I assure you it is intended for you—inspired by you!”

“ Pshaw, dear! as for inspiration, I believe it is copied out of some old valentine book, or obsolete song book—for, such as it is, I believe ‘ fond Felix’ could not have produced it. Perhaps the Lady’s Magazine for 1700 may have the best claim to it; we have whole rows of it at home, and I shall look it out in the poetical department; but it has certainly been adapted for you.”

“ What can make you think so?—it seems to me so much better suited to you.”

“ To me! oh, fie! As for genius, I tell you he thinks nothing of my poetry; indeed he has done his best to dishearten me and persuade

me to quit Parnassus—so the title of ‘daughter of genius’ cannot be meant for me, dear ! Then have I dark eyes, or brown hair, or Juno form ? No, no, it is your portrait.”

“ No, no, your eyes might be called darkly bright by a poet.”

“ But not by Sir Felix—and my hair brown ?

“ A golden brown I think it might.”

“ And the Juno form ?”

“ Why who can say what form Juno had ? every poet has his own idea of beauty—his own beau ideal.”

“ But, as I said before, Sir Felix is a matter-of-fact man, and says what he means, and means what he says. To tell you the truth, I am very glad of it—I would much rather you had him than I !”

“ You surprise me ! do you really mean that you would refuse him ?”

“ I do indeed, but I speak in confidence—quite entre nous ; I was silly and vain enough to fear he was serious in his attentions to me,

and I dreaded the pain of rejecting so kind a friend, and one all parents would so commend as a suitor ; but those verses, which I am sure are meant for you, convince me he was only trifling with me, and on the whole I am very glad of it!"

"I assure you, you are wrong, but I must implore you to let this be a secret between us ; do you promise me not to allude to it, directly or indirectly ?"

"I do ; and now let us return, I hear the gentleman, and if you like him, I sincerely wish you joy, but warn you he is a flirt and a deceiver, for I really had no doubt of his affection, and very little of his intentions."

"You will yet see you were right."

"No, no, I consider those lines conclusive!"

Lucilla returned with a lighter heart (although her vanity was a little wounded) to her mother's side ; Sir Felix was talking to the Marchioness ; Miss Undermine contrived to waylay him on

his road to Lucilla Temple, and lure him into a chair by her side.

“I have been working in your cause,” she said.

“Indeed! how shall I thank you?”

“How beautiful you look to-night, Sir Felix,” she said with an air of playful simplicity; “go away, you are a dangerous man. There, don’t look at me, what’s the use of captivating me too? Do you want to make a conquest of me too?”

“It would be a glorious one.”

“And a useless one too; but how exquisitely you are dressed.”

“I can return the compliment; the Marchioness of Hauteville admires you exceedingly, far more than she does Lucilla.”

“And *you* agree with her?” And she playfully raised her finger and smiled archly in his face, shaking her head at him the while—“Ah, you know you don’t!”

“ I do admire you very much—perhaps in some respects as much, but——”

“ I understand, however *il n'est pas question de moi*, I have a great deal to say to you about her.”

“ About her! then say it; do say it, sweetest friend!”

“ I cannot here, this is neither the time nor the place—I must see you alone!”

“ Shall I have the honor of calling on you in Bedford Row?”

“ No, it looks so particular, and makes people talk so.”

“ I may not presume to hope you would call on me?”

“ No, that would not do.”

“ Nor meet me anywhere?”

“ I don't know—perhaps I might be able to do that; let me see, in the gardens of Russell Square, I could see you alone there, if you come to the gate to-morrow.”

“ To-morrow I am engaged all day at Felix Park, and the next day too.”

“ Well, the day after that, at eight in the evening, I will contrive to meet you there. Mamma and the girls are luckily going to a party, I will plead a head-ache, and retire to my room. Papa and Renard will have no suspicion and will not miss me, and I will then slip out and reveal all I know to you.”

“ A thousand thanks !”

“ Has Lucilla seen the verses ?”

“ She has, but do not allude to them till I tell you all that has passed on the subject between us.”

“ You would keep most lovers in an agony of suspense, my sweet friend, but I am vain enough not to fear.”

“ Nay, if you are impatient I give you up.”

“ Give me up ! Oh, in pity !”

Sir Felix was so interested in his discussion that he was not aware how much like a serious

flirtation with Miss Undermine this close conference looked.

The handsome and animated girl was watched with envious and angry eyes by all the Temples, of Temple Grove. The rich widow and the pretty co-heiresses, eager for universal conquest, began to quiz—the haughty Marchioness to sneer and frown, at the idea of any commoner, so engrossing the Amphitryon of the day in her august presence. Mrs. Temple felt disappointed, but our Lucilla secretly rejoiced. Meanwhile the Baron's guitar had been adroitly drawn by him from beneath a couch, where he had caused it to be hidden by a footman.

As he saw no 'Monsieur le Marquis,' he had a sort of conviction that "Madame la Marquise" was a widow. He felt she was the great lady of the party, and imagined she must be 'immensement riche.' He had a truly French idea, that any widow, however old or decrepid, must be on the look out.

"Sans doute cette vieille est toute prête à se

remarier,” he said to his friend the Italian Marchese di Terraincognita; “elle est vieille, elle est laide, c'est égal, elle doit, avoir une fortune énorme cette femme là! Je lui ferai la cour; ah, ca c'en est fait, tu sais que cela presse un peu avec toi et moi. Nous n'avons pas de temps à perdre, mon cher! nous voilà déjà un an et demi en Angleterre et nous n'avons fait que nous amuser!”

The Marchese di Terraincognita shrugged his shoulders, and said: “*Comme tu voudras, mon cher! pour moi je la crois d'un commerce très difficile! Je crains que c'est perdre un temps qui devient tous les jours plus précieux—Dans notre Appartement ou commence à nous faire la mine—si tu m'en crois tu feras la cour à une de ces petites demoiselles Ogle; pour moi je crois que la jolie Veuve Maltston, me fait les yeux doux; elle est un peu bourgeoise, mais que voulez vous—ou fait ce qu'on peut et non pas ce qu'on vent! Ah, mon Dieu! que ta vieille Marquise à l'air fière, farouche même!*”

“Ne t'inquietes pas, mon cher!” replied the Baron, with ineffable conceit; *“elle est femme, elle est veuve, c'est tout dire! cela aura de la peine à me resister—allons nous verrons.”*

“Je te parie dix louis, mon cher, que tu ne feras rieu avec cette femme hautaine et farouche.”

“Attendons que nous ayons de quoi faire des paris, mon ami, et ne te mêles pas trop de mes affaires.”

“Tes affaires sont les miennes—ne sommes nous pas associes ensemble dans cette entreprise —n'avons nous pas juré de nous entre aider, soit par conseils, soit par autre chose, et quiconque se marie, ne doit il pas maintenir l'autre jusqu'à ce qu'il recissit à son tour! Mon Dieu! dis, n'en est il pas ainsi? Sacre! ou ne joue pas avec moi entendis tu?”—*“Qui voudrait jouer avec toi?”* asked the Marquis, a little intimidated.
“Faisons de notre mieux—les femmes nous aiment, nous adorent, nous avons l'entrée de plusieurs excellentes maisons, nous y sommes fourrés

comme des Rois—on nous traite en grands seigneurs—tâchons de profiter de notre bonheur et soyons amis. Allons, courage !”

The Baron took up his guitar, slung the broad blue ribbon across his shoulder, approached the haughty and chilling Marchioness, placed an ottoman at her feet, looked up into her enamelled face and purblind eyes with a sort of die-away adoration, and began in a fine voice and with considerable execution :—

*“Objet charmant ! toi que mon cœur adore,
Ton souvenir sue poursuit en tous lieux,
Le jour, la nuit, au lever de l'aurore,
C'est toujours toi que j'ai devant les yeux.”*

After this first verse, the Marchioness, whose countenance had expressed a sort of haughty disgust, rose, and with a cold—“Allow me to pass you, sir !” attempted to move towards the bell to order her carriage.

The Baron, who had been very much petted and even courted by certain inferior sets in

London, in which he had found impudence and boast avail him much, had no idea of the disdain and anger he would excite in the bosom of an elderly and real aristocrat. He did not the least understand the immense distinctions of rank in England, and following the indignant lady in a tender and even amorous manner, he attempted to detain her by gently touching the end of her jewelled girdle, while he continued to sing:—

Objet charmant ! faut il te dire adieu !"

But in the midst of a *roulade* on the word adieu, he was positively startled by the glance of rage and scorn the Marchioness darted at him, as snatching away her girdle, and sweeping past him, she said in very good French:—

"Monsieur, je n'ai pas l'honneur de vous connoître!"

For a moment the Baron looked abashed, but recovering himself he said: "Ah, Madame la Marquise, c'est mon malheur ce n'est pas ma

faute ;" and cringingly he stooped to pick up a glove she had dropped ; she took it as she might have done from a footman, and with the slightest and haughtiest of inclinations of her ugly head, swept past him ; and as he seemed inclined to approach and offer his arm, she said :—

“Sir Felix ! come hither.”

Sir Felix, who was still talking to Miss Undermine, darted forward.

“Let me trouble you to hand me to my carriage !” said the lady.

“So soon ?” said Sir Felix.

“So soon !” said the lady, with one of her dreadful glances at the Baron. “Say rather, not quite soon enough.”

And as she passed through the rooms and down-stairs, she begged Sir Felix never again to invite that forward foreigner to meet her, as she was resolved never to sit in the same room again with so audacious and ill-bred a person.

Sir Felix was in despair ; he offered to order

him out—he apologized—he implored—he humbled himself—but in vain.

The Marchioness coldly said: “Remember, Sir Felix, I never meet him again.”

And her old coach, drawn by her old horses, bore her proud old ladyship away.

The little Baron, nothing abashed, declared to the Marchese: “*C'est une rigueur affectée, mon cher! C'est qu'elle m'aime, la pauvre vieille, et comme elle est avare, elle craint de céder à son inclination pour moi; ah, je connais les femmes moi, si je voulais m'en donner la peine, elle serait à moi, mais elle est horriblement laide, et elle n'aime pas la musique! allons il faut captiver une des petites demoiselles Ogle! cela ne sera pas difficile.*”

And so it seemed, for these girls, pretty, well-born, accomplished, and co-heiresses, were wonderfully taken with the music, the moustachios, and the absurd flatteries of these two fellows; they had refused many respectable English gentlemen, and were generally super-

ciliious to their admirers ; the two Hon. Sans-terres did not get on at all with them, and they quizzed the old Lord Derrynane unmercifully ; but they were soon engaged in a deep flirtation with the Baron and the Marchese, who emulated each other in boasts, lies, and compliments. As old Ogle was asleep, the daughters invited the foreign beaux to a ball at their house ; and seeing this, the gay widow Malt-stone did her best to win them to her ; and as she was a “*meilleur parti*” still, she did not smile and glance in vain.

The Baron and the Marquis left the party “*ivres de joie*,” as they owned to each other, and convinced, as they said, embracing each other in true French style, before they retired to bed, that their matrimonial expedition would end in “*un grand succès*.”

The unfortunate departure of the Marchioness threw a gloom over the spirits of Sir Felix. Lucilla Temple, surrounded by the Temples of Temple Grove, gave him no oppor-

tunity of addressing her ; she felt a sort of girlish satisfaction in thus punishing what she considered to be his impertinent trifling with her. He was the more annoyed at this because business compelled him to go out of town early the next day, and not to return for three whole days—a long, long interval in a lover's almanack.

To show her indifference, Lucilla sang, played, talked, and laughed with old Lord Derrynane and the two honorable Sansterres. The two foreigners were much struck by a beauty so purely English ; but ascertaining that she was not merely poor, but penniless, they conceived a positive terror of her charms, only occasionally glancing at her as they might have done at some beautiful apparition, and assuring each other—“C'était une jolie personne, mais dangereuse, fort dangereuse même !”

The youngest Miss Temple of Temple Grove seemed to take a great interest in Lucilla ; she watched her every look and tone, and if possi-

ble, magnified to herself the power of her charms ; but that is common in a woman in love, with regard to her who has won the object she covets. The evening was a painful one to her ; her mother, angry at not having been able with all her obsequious attentions to get on much with the old Marchioness, was very bitter to her, particularly about the pointed neglect of Sir Felix, and his devoted attention to Miss Undermine. This attention he paid in the hope of piquing Lucilla. She, however, only saw in it a confirmation of what her cunning namesake had wished to imply. But poor Hebe Temple watched with an almost hysterical anxiety, and could scarcely restrain her feelings, when her mother, bending down to her with a bland smile, said :—

“ To be eclipsed and outwitted by Lucilla Temple is bad enough, but to be cut out by that flippant, vulgar, low-born creature ! I’m sure if I were a girl it would drive me mad ! I can scarcely sit here and see it. I’m sure I’m

a most unhappy mother, doomed to watch you all one after the other wither on the virgin thorn. I am sure I cannot think what I have done to deserve such a fate, as to be the mother of five old maids ; and I declare, what with your anxious, forlorn looks, and your red noses, you are becoming five ugly old maids. And then to see your father, instead of cultivating Lord Derrynane and his sons, or those two distinguished foreigners, devoting himself entirely the whole evening, to that old pauper, and his impertinent wife. How she is dressed ! I wonder how she got that satin and that turban ! —I hope by fair means ! I cannot see that Lord Lofty has done anything for them yet, and I believe he never will—they’re much too proud ! There, don’t be watching Sir Felix in that way—it’s quite disgusting—that’s not the way to get him—ah, what fools you all are ! all take after your papa ! I shall go and break up his conferenee and order the carriage !”

“ Poor Hebe started ; wretched as she was,

she did not wish to go away. Her eldest sister, the one who had so sympathized with her on a former occasion, sate down beside her and gently pressed her hand.

Hebe lifted up her eyes, swimming in irrepressible tears.

“Don’t fret, sister,” whispered the elder Miss Temple. “Lucilla will never have Sir Felix, and he will never have that bold dark girl. I feel a presentiment you will be Lady Archer yet!—here comes Sir Felix—so be cheerful.”

He did come, and a few happy minutes atoned to poor Hebe for the miseries of the day.

At length all the guests rose to depart. Lucilla Temple, in playful pique, scarcely touched Sir Felix’s extended hand, and he, in what the French so cleverly call *le dépit amoureux*, coldly bade her good night, and offered his arm to Miss Lucilla Undermine, who parted

from him with the rapturous regret of a Corinne with an Oswald.

Sir Felix's carriage bore home the Temples. Tom, after dinner had, with his mamma's connivance, slipped up-stairs to see what could be done with his torturing boots; there an arm chair and a pair of slippers so tempted him, that he availed himself of them, and somewhat affected by various wines and good cheer, he soon fell fast asleep. Here, he was found by the valet, who announced to him that the carriage was ordered, and kindly lent him a pair of boots he had cribbed from Sir Felix. Tom, still giddy and sleepy, got down stairs and into the carriage he scarce knew how, not having been missed by any one.

Mrs. Temple had spent a pleasant evening, for her greatest delights were in seeing her husband happy and her Lucilla appreciated; but her pleasure was a little damped by Sir Felix's defection—only her happy knack of hoping came to her aid, and she felt sure it

would all come right, and that he could never really hesitate between the two Lucillas.

Mr. Temple was in high spirits, and so full of a literary argument in which he had beaten Temple of Temple Grove, and of the brightening prospects of himself and his dear ones, that he could scarcely be got to bed at all.

While the Temples retired to their humble dormitories, Sir Felix Archer paced with anxious steps up and down the now deserted rooms. The thoughts of Felix Park and of Lucilla's coldness by turns tormented him.

“The little coquette!” he said, “she wants to make me propose. She is offended at the delay, perhaps angry that I gave the verses to Miss Undermine instead of sending them direct to her. But she must not give herself airs. If I do make up my mind to marry for love, I expect the sacrifice to be appreciated; I do expect gratitude, devotion, and entire submission. Poor thing, perhaps she is jealous—no wonder, that Undermine girl looked very hand-

some, but about as much to be compared to my Lucilla as Reubens's wife to Titian's Venus. Well, I see no reason for keeping her, (poor little beauty!) in an agony of uncertainty and suspense. I'll hear what Miss Undermine has to say about the verses, and if I'm pleased with what I hear, I'll make up my mind and propose to Lucilla. At any rate she'll be happy. Ah, so should I, but for this cursed affair of Felix Park. I shall never get over that."

CHAPTER VI.

The morning came!—the morning on which Mr. Temple was to wait on Lord Lofty, and probably receive the assurance of immediate presentation to some excellent living, or else some clerical appointment of equal value.

“I dare say, dearest,” said Mrs. Temple, “he *will* offer you a little immediate assistance, or if not, you could borrow a small sum to be paid directly you are in the receipt of your income.”

“I suppose I must do something of the

kind," said Mr. Temple; "but I rather shrink from it."

"I hope he will offer it," said the sanguine wife.

"God grant he may," said Mr. Temple.

"I did not much like Sir Felix Archer's behaviour last night to our Lucilla," said the lady.

"Indeed I noticed nothing; but as Lucilla never seemed to care much about him, when we are well off I shall feel no anxiety about it; indeed I always thought him rather old for her. Oh, directly I can repay the £200 so nobly lent me, and receive him in any comfort, how I should like to introduce my young friend and benefactor to you and to Lucilla; he is of all the men in the world the one I should most like to bestow my darling upon."

"Poor dear! it is to-morrow she leaves us. How kind of Miss Trueblue! but no wonder, Lucilla is such a charming companion. I could not have consented to part with her, only of late she has looked sometimes so pale and wan, I

quite tremble for her health. I expect she will return from this little tour looking quite blooming, and then if we are settled in some delightful Rectory, and you like to bring your young friend to call, why then, if he is fancy free, I think he must fall in love with our Lucilla; and if she is not attached to Sir Felix, I would sooner see her that excellent young man's wife with five hundred a year, than Lady Archer with ten thousand."

"Well, dearest! Fortune has befriended us so well hitherto that we will trust that your mysterious young friend may prove to be heart-whole. And now come to breakfast; I heard Lucilla go down half an hour ago."

It was a merry and a happy breakfast, and a few unwonted delicacies betrayed Lucilla's share in the inheritance of hope. A pot of marmalade, a dish of strawberries, and some new-laid eggs, had been added to the ordinary breakfast of tea and dry toast, rather with re-

ference to their expected than their actual resources.

Mrs. Temple did not quite approve of this practical illustration of her own faith, but she did not like to damp Lucilla's spirits, and she said nothing ; but the little incident brought to her mind traits of her own inexperience and trust in the future, for which she had bitterly atoned, and when she remembered how often disappointment had succeeded to hopes almost as bright, her spirit sank, and she wished this eventful day happily over.

After breakfast Mr. Temple retired to array himself to the greatest advantage for his visit to Lord Lofty, whose breakfast was a luncheon to an early riser. As he went up-stairs a savoury steam issued from the kitchen, and asking what it was that smelt so good, the ever ready and prying Tom replied : " Oh, it's Lucilla has had in an immense piece of beef to make the broth for the poor, and all sorts of good things are being boiled in it, papa ! I told her I thought

you would not approve of it, but she only called me a meddling urchin and Paul Pry, for which I promised I'd tell you, papa."

"I don't like tale-bearers," said Mr. Temple coldly, waving his son away, "and particularly when become so from revenge!"

"But, papa, I wish Lucilla didn't keep the keys; since she has had them I'm obliged to ask her for everything. I don't mind asking my dear mamma, but I hate asking such a chit as Lucilla; and you see, papa, she's very wasteful; if you'll come into the kitchen and peep into the boiler, I'm sure you'll say she isn't fit to keep house."

"And I dare say you are, Tom!"

"Why, I'm sure I'd never have the charity soup made better than our own, papa."

"No, no, I suspect you think—Charity begins at home, Tom. Lucilla may be too kind to others, but you are too kind to yourself. I like Lucilla's fault best."

“Lucilla often leaves the closet unlocked, papa.”

“How do you know that, Tom?”

Tom colored to the roots of his red hair.

“Ah, Tom, you were on the look out, or you would not have known that. Go and get your Horace, sir, and remember how often in trying to expose others we condemn ourselves.”

Tom slunk away.

Mr. Temple said to his wife: “My love, till our hopes are quite realized, you must check this sanguine disposition in our young house-keeper. After all, if we should be disappointed!”

“Oh, that can scarcely be!” said his wife; “but I will warn the dear girl. Come, I have mended your stockings and your gloves, and put everything ready for you.”

Meanwhile Lucilla had retired to her little room, to prepare herself for a visit to Miss Trueblue. On the evening she had spent with her, all had been arranged. She had become

acquainted with Mr. Trueblue, whom she had only seen now and then for a minute or two before ; he was a large, heavy man, with one whole side palsied ; he saw no company, and seemed to care for little on earth but his money and his child. To please that child he was delighted that Lucilla should accompany them, and he paid her every attention his crippled state allowed him to offer. To di Moricini he seemed particularly kind, although he seldom spoke to him ; but it struck Lucilla, he would not be sorry if the handsome young artist could supplant the, to him, odious and audacious Frederick Smirk.

Poor Lucilla ! that evening had confirmed all her prepossessions in favour of di Moricini ; on that evening she inwardly confessed that her happiness was in another's keeping. She was no longer a girlish thing, ready to love where she was bid, and see through her parents' eyes. She might have said with Julie de Mortemar :—

“I am a child no longer;
I love and I am woman.”

Her gradual distaste to Sir Felix Archer’s addresses became positive disgust—worlds could not have induced her to wed him. The evening passed in a sort of feverish delight, as it always does with lovers. Di Moricini was so openly devoted in his attentions, that Lucilla felt a trembling conviction, half joy, half fear, that ere long he would propose to her. Then came the thought of her parents—what a bitter disappointment to them should she marry a foreign artist! What a blow to Tom—Tom who was so certain that Sir Felix would send him to Eton; and that he should pass his holidays at Felix Park—riding his own horse, of course a gift from Sir Felix; sporting with his own gun, followed by his own dogs. How Tom had talked all this over with Jock, and then to have to own that his sister had married a foreign portrait-painter.

‘Oh, love will still be lord of all,’ since

Lucilla can turn from these mortifying thoughts, to meet her unacknowledged lover's gaze with timid tenderness, and since she has resolved when once away from home to open her heart on the subject to her parents, and even to Tom, and if necessary to get them to let Sir Felix know that her affections are engaged.

But this is a retrospect of an evening which, as the reader knows, preceded Sir Felix Archer's dinner party. After that day she had no more anxiety about his preference; and convinced that he had been trifling with her, and perhaps preferred Miss Lucilla Undermine to herself, she saw that even Tom could not reproach her with refusing an alliance which she had never in reality (as she now believed) had any chance of.

It was with a wild flutter of delight she looked forward to her visit to the Trueblues, as she could not but see that Miss Trueblue rather encouraged the evident devotion of the young artist, and frequently commended him in glow-

ing language to her, pointing out to her the insufficiency of wealth and titles and the comfort of love in a cottage.

Lucilla had a presentiment that she should see him soon, and that this visit to the True-blues would probably colour her destiny, perhaps decide her fate. And now she is going with Miss Trueblue to give the young artist one last sitting, no wonder that her nerveless hand drops the comb again and again, and that she tries by turns every article in her little wardrobe, and cannot please herself after all.

At length she is dressed, and is about to leave the room, when a note, which in her hurry she had not noticed, meets her eye as she takes up her gloves. It is directed to her, and her cheek grows pale, and her heart beats wildly, as she sees it is the odious hand of Lord Trelawney. She tears it open, and reads:—

“Forgive me, Lucilla, if I seem to persecute you. I have much to say to you—much that you perhaps may not object to hear. Grant

me an interview in the name of mercy ; do, for I *am* wretched, and you can make me desperate. I will see you, but if you consent kindly, and name time and place, you shall have no cause to complain of me."

"Am I then for ever and in all places to be dogged and haunted by that bold bad man?" said poor Lucilla, turning deadly pale, and clasping her hands in agony of mind, while tears started from her eyes. "I will endure this no longer—I will reveal the whole to my father, and he will protect and counsel me! perhaps my want of confidence in so good and kind a parent is punished thus! He is a clergyman; a christian, an all-enduring, all-forgiving christian gentleman; this ruffian cannot provoke his gentle spirit to aught unworthy of his sacred character, but his wisdom and his love can protect his child. God knows it is only the fear of adding to his sorrows that has kept me silent; but now he is high in hope

and well and happy, now I will tell him all!"

Lucilla then rang for Norah, but Norah had no idea when or how the note was conveyed to her young mistress's dressing table, and the consciousness that some mysterious agency was used to watch over and communicate with her, added to Lucilla's resolve to endure this no longer.

"There's a note, Miss, has just come for your papa," said Norah, "brought by such a shuperfine futeman—bates Sare Falix's all to fits—it's from my Lord Lofty he's come!"

"From Lord Lofty!" said Lucilla. "Does he wait for an answer?"

"Faith, then, not he, macuishla ; he was too fine to spake to a body, but give me the bit o'writin as if I'd been dirt, the fule ; and when I said, 'Won't ye be afther waiting a bit to see if there's an answer to be sent back by ye?' 'My orders is not to wait,' he said, looking as

proud as Punch. ‘Och, then,’ said I, ‘it’s not myself would be afther detaining ye ;

“ So joy be wid ye, and a bottle o’moss,
If ye niver come back, you’re no great loss.”

Upon which he called me a pert Irish girl, and I called him a vile Saxon ; and hearing that same, and seeing my blude was up, he started off, and I called afther him :—

“ Fair weather afther ye and snow to yer heels.”

Och it was myself made him luke fulish.”

But ‘Lucilla was in no mood to listen to Norah’s battles and triumphs—battles and triumphs, by the bye, which were generally the result of an interview with any new man-servant of fashionable exterior and insolent manner. A terrible fear agitated poor Lucilla ; she hurried down-stairs. One glance at her father and mother told her all ! Hastily and silently she put Lord Trelawney’s letter in her reticule ;

she felt this was no time for adding to her poor father's distresses and alarms.

He was sitting, his arms on the table and his face resting on them, and his devoted wife was kneeling beside him, pouring out words of hope and comfort, which her pale cheeks stained with tears seemed to contradict.

“What is it, dear papa—what is it, mamma—what has happened?”

“Read that!” said her mother, pointing to a note which had fallen on the ground.

Lucilla read.

“*Lofty House, July —*

“Lady Lofty begs to inform Mr. Temple that Lord Lofty is called into the country, and therefore cannot keep his appointment with Mr. Temple; as Lord Lofty does not see how he can benefit Mr. Temple at present, he will not trouble him to call; it is very uncertain when his Lordship may be again in town.”

Lucilla felt inclined to crush this glazed and scented note, so coldly insolent, such ruin to her poor father's apparently well-founded hope. Oh, how ever after the scent of that paper was as poison to her.

“ My poor wife ! my dear, dear girl, I have yielded to a moment's weakness, but it is over. What am I that I repine at a chastisement sent me no doubt for a wise purpose. Am I to judge what is best for me ? I have been too sanguine, my dear ones—too much gladdened by a bright earthly prospect, too much elated with the thought of your happiness, my loves ! Why, Tom, my boy, what is this ? ” Tom had stolen in to hear the news, and was roaring with disappointment and grief. “ Hush, Tom, this is childish.”

“ And,” sobbed Tom, “ I had told Jock we were sure to be so well off, and to leave this nasty mean little house, and this disgraceful neighbourhood.”

“ Ah, my boy, leave off boasting ; it is a

dangerous trade. We shall leave this house ere long, I fear, but for a much worse!"

"Well, I hope Jock won't know where we go," sobbed Tom.

"Papa!" said Lucilla, "did you not always say that Lady Lofty was inimical to you?"

"Yes, my love, she ever seemed so because I would not degrade my sacred function to suit her caprices—I would not keep my congregation waiting the whims of a lady of fashion, nor neglect my poor and sick to escort her to promenades and concerts."

"Well, papa, I think there is yet hope; you know how very intriguing and vindictive she is reported to be—how she persecuted any poor creature at Dartmoor who offended her, and *she* often did cruel things, which Lord Lofty afterwards atoned for, when he knew of them. Now I know she hates, as much as Lord Lofty likes you. I dare say he has been called out of town; perhaps his mother, who was always so ill, may be dying, and he may have asked her

to write to you and tell you so. She, glad to have the opportunity, has done it thus. What think you, might it not be so?"

"It is not impossible, my darling," said Mr. Temple, with a gleam of comfort and hope in eyes, alas! alas! red with tears. "Perhaps he may yet do something for me; but it is the present moment that so requires assistance. Look at those bills, my love, and those lawyer's letters. Now any one of those threatening duns would become obsequious and patient if I could tell them I was presented to a living, or sure of an appointment, and now what can I do?"

Again he hid his face in his hands.

"Mamma, I must give up this excursion with the Trueblues," said Lucilla; "how can I go and leave you to struggle alone against such trials as these?"

"My love," said her father, pressing her fondly to his heart, "you can do no good here, and you will not refuse to go when I tell you that anxiety caused by your altered looks is one of

the greatest cares of your mother and myself."

"Besides, dearest," suggested Mrs. Temple, "Miss Trueblue told me when she called, she should continue her studies, and hinted as delicately as she could, that your remuneration would be continued too. This is no time, my love, to give up any source of profit. Go, my child, there is Miss Trueblue's carriage—leave your papa with me—I have had many years' experience in comforting," she said, with a faint smile; "but go now, my sweet darling, you cannot please or comfort us more, than by adhering in all things to your original plans; indeed, my girl," she added, with a tear, "just at this crisis the fewer we are in family the better. Kiss your father and go at once."

Lucilla was obedient, and with a cheek deadly pale, and a quivering lip, she embraced her parents and was gone.

"What is it, my boy?" said Mr. Temple, as Tom pushed something into his hand.

It was Tom's money-box! Yes, Tom's money-box! containing all he had saved for many a long month towards the dear object of his every hope and desire—the pistol at the pawnbroker's! This sacrifice was very well of Tom, for he knew that Jock was as anxious about the pistol as himself, and that much of his importance with that all-accomplished friend was owing to Tom's being looked upon as the future possessor of that long-coveted weapon.

“There's ‘one pound three’ in it, dear papa,” said Tom, the tears glittering on his sandy eyelashes, and the blush of a proud and heroic self-sacrifice tinging the snow-white skin of his head, where the parting of the thickly tufted spiral curls of bright red allowed it to be seen. “I've been saving it up for a very great object indeed, papa; but to comfort you and dear mamma is a greater still. One pound three, papa, will be a great help.”

Mr. Temple smiled (a sickly tearful smile), even in the midst of his disappointment and

anguish, at Tom's idea that the little hoard, so all-important to him, would be a great help in the complicated difficulties of a whole family. But the boy's affection and self-sacrifice touched the father's heart, and he said: "Sweet are the uses of adversity," if they teach us betimes to prefer others to ourselves. I hope, my boy, it may not be necessary for me to touch this treasure, and if not, be sure I will restore it to you intact. And now, Tom, go to your book and your room—I want to consult with mamma."

"Couldn't I help?" said Tom; for he had a great opinion of his own judgment and diplomacy.

"Only by going and doing your best to fit yourself for some situation, Tom," said his father. "Boys as young as you are, if good scholars, are taken as junior ushers, or assistant pupils, in schools, where they get board, lodging, and washing, and often some small remuneration besides; think of that, Tom."

Tom did think of it, and with ineffable disgust and dread, lest the all-penetrating Jock should discover that any such plan had been devised for the last of the Temples, and the fifth cousin of Lord Lofty.

Meanwhile Mr. Temple, after sitting for some time holding his throbbing head between his thin hot hands, called for writing materials. Meekly and gently his wife placed them before him.

“I have resolved, my love,” he said; “we have only two days now before the baker and butcher must be paid. I cannot ask any help of Sir Felix, because it would seem like taking advantage of his attentions to Lucilla, and as you seem to think he now means nothing, but prefers Miss Undermine, I cannot humble her by appearing to reckon on his friendship. Lord Lofty is of course quite out of the question; but my cousin Temple made such offers of aiding me with my new work that I have resolved to apply to him. If he will lend me

fifty pounds, we shall do, till something turns up. So now for the degrading, odious task of borrowing, in other words, begging. Oh that I had been brought up to a good trade."

The letter, written in desperation, was soon dispatched.

Meanwhile Mrs. Temple glided from the room with Lady Lofty's note. She did not reappear for some time, but what she did with that important communication the sequel will prove.

On her return she found her husband busily engaged with his "Religious History of all Nations." Quietly she took her work and sate down beside him. Presently Norah came up with two basins of excellent and savoury soup.

"Och, Masther!" she said, "it's long since you and the Misthess broke the fast of you; so I've brought you up a drop of the soup the young misthess has made for the poor, and faith, it's richer than any you've had for yourselves; and you raal gintry!"

“How much is there, Norah?” said Mr. Temple.

“Och, there’s enough for the back attic in Paradise row, and the front parlour in Cabbage lane, and the poor Hubbards in the Mews, and the Grims in Job court, and Pims in Sharp-set alley—and, faith, that’s a pretty lot of them.”

“And poor Grub with the ague in the cellar, and the starving baby in Pig street,” said Mr. Temple, “is there none for them?”

“They had a fine pitcher last week,” said Norah, evasively.

“Ah, Norah, it is small comfort to the hungry to have had food last week. I had an excellent breakfast this morning, and in due time shall have a good dinner, or at least something substantial with a cup of tea—what say you, my love?”

“That one basin of this inviting soup must go to poor Grub, and the other to the starving babe,” said Mrs. Temple.

“Och hone! och hone,” said Norah, fairly

crying, “to go to prefare the pure before yourselves, and you both of you looking as white as the inside of a pratie! Jist take a sup, do, Mas-ther dear; it’ll may be tempt ye.”

“But I wish *not* to be tempted, Norah,” said Mr. Temple, kindly but firmly; “I assure you, Norah, the savoury smell of this soup is quite temptation enough, so take it away, there’s a good girl, and carry it at once to Grub, and to the wretched baby in Pig street. But stop, get it ready, I must go and see them—you shall come with me, and carry it.”

“Let me come too,” said Mrs. Temple, kissing her husband’s hand.

“No, dearest, Pig street and Grub’s cellar in Dust alley are no places for you when you look so wan; I will not be long. Come, Norah.”

Norah went away with her soup to put it in jugs, howling almost as if she had been at a wake, and Mr. Temple hastened to the wretched cellar where, surrounded by earwigs, spiders, and cockroaches, poor Grub lay in a dreadful

ague, on a bed made of a few potatoe sacks and bits of old carpet. Much against his will, one ragged, yellow, hungry-looking grand-daughter was sent by his son, her father nominally, to watch over and wait on him, but in reality to diminish his own numerous and half-starved claimants for bread. Her father thinking that she might be fed, for a time at least, on such good things as Mr. Temple and other neighbours sent old Grub—and Grub himself declaring that he didn't want her, and couldn't maintain her, and that she'd eat him out of house and home and bring him to the Union after all.

“ And how could I bear that ? ” he said ; “ I, who always had my liberty, and ain’t so bad off here,” he added, looking round on the wretched hole—“ and but for she,” pointing to his grand-child, “ am to myself and at peace—how could I bear to be bullied and half-starved and may be set to some hard work—I who can’t sit up ? I never give up work till it give up me. I hope to die comfortable *here !* and not at last to be impri-

soned and starved after never for seventy years having one parish penny. If I wasn't burdened with *she*, I'd be very well off even now."

Still he was too weak, forcibly to eject the girl. And there she was (thriftless and useless, as the untaught children of the wretched London poor generally are) sitting, half naked, on the floor, playing with the earwigs and cockroaches, who seemed much more neat and respectable than herself; and there lay her lean, unshorn, leaden-coloured grandfather, acting the dog in the manger with the food Mr. Temple and other poor neighbours sent him, growling if the girl attempted to touch what he was yet too *ill* to eat. And there she squatted, with her wild, matted, rust-coloured hair, her dark hollow neck, and ragged and jagged little brown stuff frock, watching with imbecile mouth wide open, and yet cunning cat-like eyes, till the old man slept, when she would seize on some of his food and return to her

corner and devour it more like a wild beast than a christian child.

To such dens as these did the gentle and gifted Temple constantly repair, trying to soothe the body and awaken the soul, incurring every kind of risk, enduring every species of annoyance, bent only on fulfilling his high mission as a minister of Christ ; and many who would not shrink from the comparatively healthy cottages of the country poor, would have been conquered here—here where dirt and dis temper, desperation and defiance met him at every turning. There is always something sweet and fresh in a country home, and generally some attempt at cleanliness and order in the meanest cottage ; there is the large old chimney, admitting air, and sometimes through its wide chasm glimpses of the blue sky ; there is the little garden, and a few flowers, humble but yet fresh ; and the beautiful heaven, the heaving trees, and the delicious air, free to all ! But here, here was nothing but squalor, and

loathsome dirt. Then in the country there is a kind and cordial feeling towards 'his Reverence;' the poor are proud to see him, feel comfort in his advice and his prayers ; they cannot die in peace without their minister. But here, a radical feeling, born of wretchedness, like vile weeds springing from a dung-hill, poisoned the hearts of the poor against all of that class they looked upon as their oppressors, and it was long before Mr. Temple could overcome it. But kindness and patience and true charity did conquer it at last, and he had good reason to hope that even in the worst part of that wretched district, he had saved many a soul.

At the hovel in Pig street he had met a lady, who, once a gay daughter of fashion and pleasure, had been brought by his preaching to see the vanity and folly of the world and of her own heart ; he found her in her rich and grand attire, now humbly worn, bending over the wretched cradle of the half-starved baby. She

told Mr. Temple that she was about to become the head, under his guidance, of a committee of lady district visitors, and she meekly placed in his hands a sum already collected by her for the poor. This was just the sort of help Mr. Temple wanted, and had long been trying in vain to induce the ladies of his congregation to offer, and now it was done ; and Mrs. Onslow was not only herself perhaps rescued from a life of frivolous sin, but was become the humble instrument of mercy and charity in his hands.

It was late when he returned faint and hungry to tea. Dinner he refused, but he was happy ; a blessing had been sent upon his earnest and yet gentle ministry. The past and the future were all gloom ; he had just received a bitter and unlooked-for disappointment. Pecuniary cares thickened around him, and yet he was calm and even cheerful.

He sate at his humble repast, to which Norah had contributed eggs and bacon unordered (a present from herself), and enjoyed it far more

than Sir Felix Archer did his epicure and Frenchified banquet. He felt sure all would be well, and pressing his fond wife's hand, he said, "Let us but be of the righteous, my beloved one, and then we shall reap the reward God has promised to them and to their children."

CHAPTER VII.

Lucilla's pale cheek and the tears that still moistened her soft brown eye-lashes, could not escape the anxious and affectionate observation of Miss Trueblue, and after much solicitation, Lucilla revealed the sad disappointment they had just met with at home, and timidly and with many sobs acknowledged her reluctance to leave her parents in so much peril and poverty.

"But I will go, dear friend," she said, "for they wish it, and my fear of the persecutions of

that bold bad man, Lord Trelawney, of which as yet they know nothing, make me determine still to encumber you with a sad and anxious companion."

"You shall be neither, Lucilla," said Miss Trueblue; "trust to me, by some means or other we will leave your dear parents in comfort."

Lucilla smiled a faint incredulous smile, and at this moment Tucker came up to say the young artist was below waiting to escort the ladies to his house.

Lucilla was in love; she looked at the glass, at her dishevelled hair and hurried dress.

"Go to my dressing-room, love," said Miss Trueblue; "bathe your eyes and 'sleek your soft alluring locks.' I will entertain Signor di Moricini till you are yourself again."

It was half an hour before Lucilla felt equal to a meeting with her adoring and adored, though unacknowledged, lover, and *une bonne demie-heure*, as the French say, before she was

at all satisfied with the face Miss Trueblue's glass reflected ; and yet to the eye of taste and love, the drooping lid, the quivering lip, and the heaving bosom of the afflicted daughter, were lovelier even than the radiant bloom of the joyous Psyche.

Miss Trueblue and the Signor had spent in earnest discussion about Lucilla, her parents, and their affairs, all the time she had been strengthening her heart, bathing her eyes, and smoothing her hair.

This is not the place to reveal the exact nature or result of their conversation, but when the pale Lucilla raised her eyes to meet those of the young Francesco di Moricini, she saw that he was pallid and trembling as herself, and that his passionate eyes were full of tears.

There was a gentle and earnest deference in his demeanour which Lucilla had never before noticed, and which was more soothing to her in her present state, than the joyous and playful manner in which he generally accosted her.

“Oh why, oh why,” said Lucilla to herself—“why is he not an Englishman in even moderate circumstances, that I might own to my own heart and to my parents that I love him as I can never love again. Were he the poorest of curates I should be so proud to share and cheer a little cottage home, to do my utmost to be in all respects a help meet for him—with him to visit the sick and the sorrowful, to teach in his Sunday school, to do all the good the poor can do the poor; but a foreigner and an artist, good as he is, noble and pious as I feel him to be, how all my parents’ prejudices will rise against him; they cannot see him with my eyes, or know him with my heart! Oh, that he were but a poor English curate!”

It was strange, ’twas “passing strange” to hear this girl of such rare beauty and such rarer genius—genius and beauty which a woman of the world might easily have bartered for a coronet and a brilliant fortune—wishing in the

beautiful humility of her pure young heart that her lover were but a poor curate !

A poor curate ! how would match-making mammas have scowled, and husband-hunting daughters have sneered !

The day was a bright enchanting day in August, and even in London the air was balmy, as Miss Trueblue's chariot bore herself, Lucilla, and the young artist to the abode of the latter.

There is always something pleasing and soothing in the subdued light of an artist's studio, stealing as it does on marble dreams of beauty, and pictured visions of more than mortal loveliness.

As Lucilla looked round on the statues, the casts, the pictures, and the flowers and plants profusely displayed in her honour, she thought that the most gorgeous drawing-rooms of the wealthiest peeress would seem gaudy and cold to her, compared to this temple of genius and art.

A curtain is thrown over the picture on the easel, it is drawn aside, and there, in an exquisite frame, and almost completed, she recognises the Psyche ; how must the young artist have toiled at that picture to bring it so quickly to such perfection.

But though the ladies pronounce it perfect, the artist knows there is much to do. Lucilla gradually recovers her spirits under the influence of Miss Trueblue's cheering good sense and di Moricini's eloquent and passionate language.

“And now,” he said, “at this our last sitting, do enchant me, dear Miss Temple, with a poem or two ; I want to see again the inspiration of the Muse on the eyes and the lips of Psyche.”

“She has written a new poem,” said Miss Trueblue, “called, ‘The Italian Girl to her English Lover.’”

Lucilla blushed deeply.

“Indeed !” said the artist ; “ah, how I wish it had been the English girl to her Italian

lover ; but perhaps the prejudice of the English maidens against Italian lovers is too great for such a theme.”

“ Probably,” said Miss Trueblue, with an arch smile, while Lucilla looked down and blushed more deeply than before.

“ And now for the poem.”

Lucilla in a faltering voice began.

“ THE ITALIAN GIRL TO HER ENGLISH LOVER.

The early violets you gave were sweet,
And withered will endure through many a year ;
Faded and pale, when they my gaze shall meet
In after-life, I'll greet them with a tear !

A tear of passionate regret for hours,
Winged by thy presence—hours that would seem,
But that I fondly clasp those deep blue flow'rs,
Less a reality than some fond dream !

Yet why, when all around me tells of love,
Of spring, of hope, and all their buoyant train,
Why boding spirit to the future rove ?
Why turn from present bliss to coming pain ?

Alas ! alas ! twin-born with love is grief,
Co-heirs of this warm woman heart of mine ;
Vainly Love wreathes the rose ; in dark relief,
Sorrow the tear-gemmed cypress will entwine !

Thou wilt go forth, and in that hallowed isle,
All unforgotten even by my side,
Warm hearts will welcome, deep blue eyes will smile,
And gentle sighs thy long delay will chide.

And household words and home's sweet welcomings,
And that warm fire-side you love so well ;
I sing them, dearest, like the swan who sings,
With breaking heart, her own prophetic knell.

Do not disturb this current of sad thought,
A word would make it seem reality ;
Were this dark future by *thy* fancy wrought,
Death should immortalize my memory !

It *may* be, *must* be, from my own sad heart,
I can endure this deadly prophecy ;
My spirit whispers, 'tis decreed—we part ;
When time confirms it, dear one, I can die !

I marked the honey-bee, the summer rose,
He won, he left her for an humble flow'r ;

Vainly warm zephyrs woo'd, ere evening's close,
The fair rose droop'd and perish'd in her bow'r.

There is a master-hand, that hand can bring
Sweet music from an else aye silent lute ;
Vainly a stranger's hand would touch the string,
That loyal lyre for all but thee is mute !

There is a master spirit—one alone
The deep devotion of this heart can wake ;
That master-hand, that master-spirit gone !
Lyre and heart all silently will break !

The trembling earnestness of Lucilla's voice,
and the deep and even tearful attention of her
two listeners proved, that the passionate love of
the Italian girl found an echo in the hearts
of all three.

Rapidly and sweetly the hours glided by, and
still at this last sitting there was something to
be done—some finishing touch of grace and
beauty to be added—an earnest prayer for a
few moments longer, and a look of entreaty
more eloquent than the prayer. Ices, jellies,

fruits, and lemonade had been placed on the table by the dingy, voluminous, old char-woman, with the red bottle nose, the canting voice, and spite of her professed rheumatics, the ever ready curtsey.

Disagreeable as was this specimen of a whining, dram-drinking, snuff-taking race, Lucilla connecting her with di Moricini and 'Love's young dream,' could not but take an interest even in her old bonnet of rusty silk, which perched upon her dirty cap and tilted on her tell-tale nose, was actually worn, though she was little aware of it, in a recent French fashion, of all fashions the least graceful, modest, and feminine, and now luckily sinking, grade by grade, till ere long it will only be worn by its original inventors, the char-women of London! And as it makes pretty women look plain, and plain women plainer still, while it gives to both a coquettish and vulgar '*pretension*,' we shall rejoice to see it resigned again to those who for so many years have monopolised it.

Among these our friend of Howland street was preeminent, and a little caricature di Moricini had taken of her, would surely have put the few tasteless belles who still wear their bonnets à la char-woman completely out of conceit with this bold and now bye-gone fashion.

The time came at last when Lucilla and Miss Trueblue were resolved to go, and when even di Moricini dared no longer to implore.

“ Let us,” he said, “ on this last and loveliest day drive into the Regent’s Park, and take one turn by the water there, and then I will say I am content and ask nothing more.”

The ladies agreed. They got out in the inner circle of the Regent’s Park—dismissed the carriage, having determined to walk home, and di Moricini having given an arm to each, they walked through the grounds which, always so pretty, were on this day of dawning Love and ripened Summer, a scene of enchantment.

After walking on in silent but intense happiness for some time, Lucilla felt so tired that she

was obliged to sit down, and di Moricini was obliged to sit beside, and Miss Trueblue thought herself obliged to gather some leaves and blades of grass at a little distance, and look perpetually away from our lovers. But lovers are dull people, and seldom avail themselves of an opportunity of an explanation, however much longed for; then too they procrastinate most shamefully, and have often not only to learn that procrastination is the thief of time, but find it often that of love; in short they seem to have no ready wit at all.

Di Moricini sate for a long time looking at Lucilla, and blushing because he did so, and Lucilla sate looking at her shoe, and blushing she knew not why. At length he has, with the desperation of bashful love, seized her hand, and murmured, 'Lucilla,' and she has faltered 'Francesco,' when up ran Miss Trueblue, white as the dead, panting and in wild alarm, and followed by an ill-looking man, a sort of beggarly bye-gone clerk.

“ What is it?—what is it? ” shrieked Lucilla.

“ For God’s sake, say what is the matter, ”
cried di Moricini.

“ My father! my poor father! ” sobbed Miss Trueblue. “ Come with me, in mercy come! ” she said, catching Francesco’s arm; “ he has sent for me, for you! he is dying! Oh, God! ”

“ Dying! ” said Lucilla, faint at heart.

“ Dying! ” echoed Francesco, pallid as her-
self.

“ Come this moment! ” shrieked Miss Trueblue.

“ I advise you to make haste, mem—there’s not a moment to be lost, ” said the man.

“ Lucilla, stay here, you cannot walk; you will only impede us; do stay, ” said Miss Trueblue.

“ Shall I fetch the young lady a coach? ” said the man.

“ Yes, ” said di Moricini, “ she cannot walk, and we must hasten on till we meet with some conveyance.

“ Go, go with her, Francesco,” said Lucilla ; “ see how wildly she rushes on ; I will stay here till that man brings a coach, and then I will go home.”

“ So be it, and farewell—God bless you !”

They were soon out of sight. Lucilla sank back on the bench to await the coach—presently she heard a rustling in the trees behind her, a light laugh, a well-known and dreaded voice, uttered her name, and leaping over the paling behind her, Lord Trelawney was at her side !

CHAPTER VIII.

Poor Lucilla ! a deadly faintness came over her heart when she found herself alone in the inner circle of the Regent's Park, now almost deserted, for it was getting dusk, with this daring and desperate man ; but she determined not to show a fear which would be a confession of weakness. She looked pale but haughty, and tried not to seem aware of her persecutor's dreaded presence, till he said :—

“ Lucilla ! you drive me to do these things.”

“ What things, my lord ?” said the poor girl, quite off her guard.

“ To use these subterfuges to see you for a few moments alone.”

“ Subterfuges!” exclaimed Lucilla, the truth dawning upon her terrified heart.

“ Yes, subterfuges ! Why do you squander with a clothier’s daughter, and a beggarly foreign Sign-Painter, the hours I would give my life to spend with you—hours I pine, and sue in vain for five minutes on which my fate depends, while I see five hours spent with an Italian impostor and a tradesman’s daughter !”

“ I am compelled to hear you, sir,” said Lucilla, “ because I cannot go hence till a coach I have sent for comes ; but as I do not even recognise you as an acquaintance, I shall certainly not listen to your animadversions on my conduct.”

“ You must and you shall ; such a wild strange love as I bear you gives me a right to be heard.”

Lucilla turned away, her cheek grew more deadly, but she did not speak.

“I have watched you all this day.”

Lucilla started.

“I see by that start you *do* listen to me—it is well—I mean you no wrong, no outrage; I only ask what any gentleman has a right to from any lady, a hearing! If you grant me this, I will behave to you as if you were my sovereign lady; but if you refuse to hear me——”

“I do not refuse—speak on,” said Lucilla, tears choking her utterance; “but be quick, for I hear the coach I ordered.”

“My poor child, that coach will never come,” said his enraging Lordship, laughing.

“Why so?” shrieked Lucilla.

“You defied me! you would not listen to my prayer. I said you should grant me an interview. I only asked for a few minutes conversation with you—a boon a Duchess would have granted.”

“ But as I am no duchess, I declined.”

“ Pretty Lucilla, then if you had been, you would have listened to my suit?”

“ At least the protection that would then have surrounded me would have saved me from all cowardly insult!”

“ You are severe, prettiest, and cruel too, but I am patient and indomitable; I can watch, aye, watch like the wildest cat, and trifle and purr, and let my little mouse fancy herself at liberty, but I never release my prey. I watched you all day, traced you here, and sent that man to remove your companions—he will return no more.”

“ And they?” cried poor Lucilla, sick at heart.

“ Why not just yet!”

“ And was the story of Mr. Trueblue’s illness a falsehood, sir?” said Lucilla, trembling.

“ Nay a *ruse*, sweet Lucilla.”

“ Then I should be ashamed to fear so false and base a man; cruel and mean to give

a daughter's heart so horrible a shock in order to compel a poor young defenceless girl who loathes and despises you to listen to your unmanly insults."

"Then why compel me, sweet Lucilla, to use force or fraud to see you alone for one moment?"

"Because I hate to see you—because your aspect fills me with horror!"

"But I do so love you!"

"And even if it were so, that love is not returned, and never can be; your wealth, your coronet have not a charm for me."

"Nay, my pretty Lucilla, do not say 'no' till you are asked. My coronet I never dreamt of offering," said Lord Trelawney, with a venomous smile.

"Then you are baser than I thought you," said Lucilla, rising, while a proud flush mantled her cheek. "Thank heaven, I hear voices; be it who it may, if you dare to follow or to speak to me I will claim that

protection no Englishman could refuse me. Nay, do not touch me, or I cry aloud for help, and here comes a party to whom I will at once appeal if you dare to follow or molest me. Thank heaven for this!"

"Silly girl, you make me your enemy, I who so wish to be your friend; be it as you will, but you shall not escape me—we must meet again. There is now between us *à guerre à la mort*. Make no idiotic disturbance—there, I am gone!"

So saying, he bounded again over the paling, and Lucilla following in the wake of a gay party of ladies, gentlemen and children, reached the opening of the inner circle just as di Moricini and Miss Trueblue drove back in search of her, full of the cruel and base hoax that had been played off upon them, and which Lucilla prudently forbore to explain to Miss Trueblue till she found herself alone with her.

CHAPTER IX.

When Lucilla returned to her poor home, she found her parents at tea, and from the cheerful content of their countenances and the happy serenity of the scene, she fancied some comforter must have been with them. And she was right, two angel comforters had visited them—Faith and Resignation.

Again Lucilla's dread of Lord Trelawney suggested the wisdom of revealing his detestable persecution to her father, and again the dread of destroying his comfort and her mother's

peace deterred her. While she presided at the little tea-table a double knock startled the little party.

Tom suggested it was Sir Felix Archer come to propose to Lucilla. Mr. Temple felt sure it was Temple of Temple Grove bringing the fifty pounds. Mrs. Temple agreed with Tom, and her heart beat at once with hope and fear ; but Lucilla, her very spirit sank with intense emotion, for she believed it was *di Moricini* come to ask her of her parents.

A minute of intense anxiety passed, and then Norah came up and presented a card, and added, “The gentleman wishes to see yourself, sare, a minute alone ; I told him you were all at tay, but he persisted he must see yourself for one minute.”

“Who is it ?” faltered Mrs. Temple.

“Mr. Stanley, my love,” said her husband, rising in joyful agitation ; “if I can induce him to come up I will.”

“Oh do ! I do so long to see him !”

“ Well,” said Tom, “ let all this beggarly tea be swept away; fine people he’ll think us! at tea before he has dined.”

Rapidly Tom, Lucilla, and Norah removed the tea, and eagerly did Mrs. Temple smooth her daughter’s hair, and gaze upon her lovely face; but it was all in vain. After about an hour, the street door was heard to open, an elegant Brougham, with two sleek and noble greys, drove up to the door. Lucilla, shrouded by the curtain, caught one glimpse of a tall and elegant figure, and the next moment her father, radiant with hope and joy, returned to them.

For a few minutes he could not speak, but pressed his wife and his children alternately to his heart, and then murmuring, “ Thank God! thank God!” he wiped away the manly tears of gratitude and love.

After a little while he was sufficiently calm to tell them that his young benefactor, Mr. Stanley, had been indefatigable in his cause

since he saw him last, and had induced a spirited and enterprising publisher to offer him five hundred pounds for the copyright of the first edition of his work, and to advance him at once one hundred and fifty.

“Think, dear ones,” he said, “this will meet all present difficulties, pay all degrading debts, and enable us to live in peace till the work is completed. We can be not only just but generous, my darlings ; and in addition to all this present relief, Mr. Stanley is using his interest, and he seems to have much, to get me a living ; but this is not all, nor half the source of my present deep delight. From some remarks he made, and some questions he asked, I have reason to believe that he has seen Lucilla —to see her is to love her, as we all know—and I cannot separate in my own mind his boundless kindness and delicate generosity to me from the admiration I see he feels for her. If there is one thing I earnestly wish, it is to see her the wife of such a man. But do not

fear, my child," he said, perceiving the unhappy and conscious Lucilla turn deadly pale—"he is going away for some months, and has only begged my permission to call on his return, and has made me promise then to introduce him to your mother and you!"

Lucilla made no reply, but the tears gushed from her eyes.

"See, Lucilla," said Tom, not a little jealous of the importance attached to his sister and her charms, "what a fool you are to be crying like that when you know, you sly thing, in your heart you're as pleased as Punch! I should hate to be a girl—poor, weak, stupid things as girls are! but I know if I were a girl I'd have fifty lovers, whereas at the utmost you've only got three. Jock is often surprised to think you've got so few; he says, even the governess at his master's has four, though she's got red hair, and a squint, so you needn't give yourself airs."

"It is not the quantity, but the quality, of

the lovers a lady has, which makes them a source of pride or of shame," said Mrs. Temple. "I never wish my girl to have more than one, and that one, a man worthy to be her husband. All flirtations, tender friendships, half attachments, and coquettish intimacies, I, from the depths of a true woman heart, despise, and trust my daughter will inherit my abhorrence and contempt of them. On the man she loves and selects, whether Sir Felix Archer, or Mr. Stanley, or any other, I do hope she will bestow her first affection in all its purity and fervour. It was my happy fate to give to your father, Lucilla, a heart that had never for one moment been darkened by another's shadow—a hand that no other had ever pressed, and I do hope you will be able to say the same in presence of your husband, for it is a source of honest pride and joy. And now finish packing, sweetest, and get to bed, for you look very ill and weary."

Silently Lucilla embraced her parents. How

would they bear to hear she loved Francesco di Moricini ? Why had she now no power to reward the generous benefactor of her beloved father ? He seemed to be everything a maiden's heart could covet and glory in. Would she then for his sake be fancy free ? Alas ! alas ! there is so beguiling a fascination, so wild a delight, so ambrosial a bliss "in first and passionate love," that Lucilla owned to her own heart she would rather indulge in this half painful ecstacy—this hopeless passion—this tumultuous and unreal joy—than be again the happy heart-whole girl she was, before she knew the blissful misery of love.

Tom lingered some time in the drawing-room in the hope that his father, now in the possession of a cheque for one hundred and fifty pounds, would return the money-box containing his treasure. There it stood untouched on the mantel-piece. Tom thought that like a heroine in a novel it "had never looked so lovely." Sometimes he thought of boldly repossessing

himself of it, but then he had his doubts what right he had, to what he had *bona fide* given away. At last he placed it on the table near his father, who was engaged writing a sermon.

As Tom placed it exactly where the inkstand usually was, Mr. Temple, who was rather absent, two or three times dipped his pen into the slit in the money-box.

Tom had great hopes, but Mr. Temple only quietly pushed it away, and proceeded with his work.

At length Tom said: “A money-box is a very useful thing, papa!”

“Very, my boy,” said his father, abstractedly.

“Shall I break this one open, papa?”

“Don’t talk to me, my dear, just now!”

Tom was ready to cry.

He sate for some time in moody silence; at length Mrs. Temple coming into the room he went up to her, and whispered his fears that now his papa was rich he had forgotten the promise made when he was poor.

Tom's voice was so tearful that Mrs. Temple was moved.

"You do not want Tom's money now, my love, do you?" said she to her husband.

"Why do you ask?" he said, looking rather displeased.

"Because he is so anxious about it."

"Indeed! then let him take it; had he been less so, I would have added to his store. Those who lend, Tom, should never betray a haste to be paid—they lose their right to one's gratitude if they do; take it—in your place I would rather have sacrificed some childish toy than my father's approbation and thanks."

Tom took it, abashed and dismayed, and hurried up-stairs to hide his box and his tears. Ere long, however, he went to Lucilla, nominally to assist her in packing, but in reality to encumber her with offers of help, never realized. He scrawled "*Miss Temple, Passenger,*" on all her cards, blotting and smearing them, and leaving

no space for any direction—he burnt his fingers sealing these useless cards on boxes—strained a lock of one box, and broke a key into another—corded a trunk that was to be left behind—set fire to a curtain, and overturned the ink on a toilet cover ; and, in short, was so conceited, imperiously active, boasting and tormenting, that Lucilla felt it a great relief when he grew sleepy and retired to bed, in order, as he said, to be up to get her off in time the next day.

When he was gone, order was restored, and though packing up for a first visit is a formidable thing, Norah and her young mistress did get through it at last. Lucilla, fairly worn out with fatigue and emotion, fell asleep, her own sorrows forgotten in the rapturous remembrance that she left her beloved parents in comfort and peace. Oh, how fervently she blessed and prayed for him, her poor devoted heart could not even wish to love ; and oh, how fondly she

wished that poor Francesco di Moricini had been that good and kind and wealthy benefactor of her father—the young and generous Englishman to whom he would proudly have given his child!

CHAPTER X.

In spite of all Tom's assertions that he should be up the first in the house, and make the tea, and call Lucilla, (if not Norah) and see his sister off, he slept the next morning as only a boy can sleep—the broad bright sun shining through the unshrouded window on his curtainless bed—lighting up kites, marbles, half-finished fireworks, tops, walking sticks, fishing-rods, pots of paste, shreds of gold, silver, and coloured papers, useless bullets, which had once been good leaden spoons, and in the centre of all, the money-box !

Yes, there he slept like a young dormouse, and so well were his teasing, meddling, boasting propensities known, that no one thought of awaking him—when, after a hurried, tearful breakfast, (for a first absence from a dear home and fond parents is a heart-sickening thing) Lucilla tore herself from her weeping mother and pale father, she ran up-stairs and embraced the sleeping Tom, who waking, declared it was an infamous shame he had not been called, and darted out of bed in time to see the Trueblue's carriage drive up to the door—Lucilla spring into it, with her handkerchief to her eyes—the luggage rapidly packed by adroit footmen—his sister wave her hand—and all was over.

Seeing this Tom, with a bitter sense of unrecognised merit and unappreciated genius, stole back into bed, and was soon once more in “the sweet land of dreams.”

It was arranged by Miss Trueblue that Lucilla should join them at an hotel near London Bridge, for in order to outwit the bold perse-

vering, and unscrupulous Trelawney, the True-blues had determined instead of going, as they had led their household to imagine, at once to their seat in Berkshire, they would first spend a week or two at Ramsgate. The sea-air was always beneficial to Mr. Trueblue and his daughter, and Margate, Ramsgate, and Brighton were alternately honoured every autumn by a visit from the wealthy paralytic citizen, and his poor deformed and only child.

It would have mortified many a self-sufficient beauty, accustomed to hear a great deal of the “might, the majesty of loveliness,” and many an accomplished and brilliant girl full of “the power of thought, the magic of the mind”—it would, I say, have mortified such a good deal to have known how many of the loungers they met on pier, esplanade, parade, and sands, and believed brought there by the loadstars of their eyes, or the fascination of their wit, were in reality eagerly and tremblingly on the look out for the little deformed, plain-spoken, quiet

daughter of old Trueblue—that these idlers would at any time have left the loveliest and wittiest on the sands, to the certainty of wet feet and rude shrimp boys, for the chance of showing off one grace of person or dress before the little Hunchback.

Yet so it was ; among the fine, showy, insolent looking men who professed to despise her, there were perhaps only a very, very few whom a look of encouragement would not have brought to her feet ; but this knowledge gave her no pleasure, no pride ; she blushed for human nature when proposals poured in upon her—when men, some with tall strong persons, and others with sharp bright wits, all able to earn a livelihood by the sweat of the brow or the brain, and all originally poor, and growing daily poorer and poorer, wasted their little remaining substance in dressing to dazzle her, and their time in watching her outgoings and incomings.

But then her heart was given past recal—

given to a vulgar, ignorant, unworthy being, with nothing but personal beauty and some good-nature to recommend him, else so many lovers might well have made her believe herself lovely. But she was so entirely attached to her Frederick Vernon Smirk, that she had not a thought for any other man. The love we cannot the least share or return never seems very real, and so to her, these followers were objects of positive ridicule.

Lucilla had seen so little of the world, particularly of late years, that everything was new and exhilarating to her. She found Mr. Trueblue and his daughter in a drawing-room of the London Bridge Hotel—Mr. Trueblue taking, early as it was, a glass of brandy and water, for the good of the house, and as he believed to prevent sea-sickness. He was a very large, unwieldly, corpulent man ; he had been a joyous, florid-looking *bon vivant*, but now his eyes were heavy, his skin a sort of sea-green, his flesh seemed loose, and his countenance

expressed pain. His affection for his daughter was unbounded, but it betrayed itself principally in a fretful and fidgetty desire to have her ever by his side—in querulous and minute inquiries after her, if she absented herself for a few moments—and in a determination to punish her, by suffering the greatest discomfort rather than allow any one but herself to do any of the thousand things his palsied state required.

His conversation was made up of boasts which betrayed the pride of wealth—jealousies and suspicions so common to rich parvenus not born and bred to affluence and importance—groans and lamentations—complaints of his own uselessness—and now and then a touching but unreal desire that he might soon cease to be a burden to any one.

Poor Mr. Trueblue, he was one of a numerous class; after a youth of toiling, painstaking abstinence, he had married his employer's wealthy daughter; riches and city honours had

poured in, and with them public dinners and private indulgences. The spare, active, watchful apprentice soon became the bloated *bon vivant*, he enjoyed some years of civic banquets—bowls of punch abroad, and hogsheads of brandy and water at home; and then came a second change—the strong constitution, tried in youth by abstinence, and in middle age by excess, gave way, and Rheumatism, Palsy, and Gout claimed him as their own.

He welcomed Lucilla with tolerable cheerfulness, for in happier days he had been a great admirer of the fair, and still paid a sort of involuntary, unconscious homage to indisputable beauty; besides his daughter was rubbing his shoulder, in which he felt, or fancied he felt, a dull pain.

“Good morning to you, ma’am,” he said to our young Lucilla, extending a palsied, leaden-coloured hand, which felt cold as death; “I hope you found the ‘charrut’ comfortable and

the servants handy and attentive ; with their wages they ought to be !”

Miss Trueblue coloured. (How much the sensitive and educated children of the vulgar rich are to be pitied !)

“Oh, nothing could be more comfortable than the carriage, or more attentive than the servants,” said Lucilla.

“I’m glad to hear it, ma’am ; my servants had better be attentive to my friends, and my daughter’s friends ; they’d better not let me hear anything to the contrary. I’ll not stand it.”

And an orange flush suffused his primrose face—and he clenched his cold grey hands, and compressed his blue lips. Lucilla looked alarmed. Miss Trueblue tried to reassure her with a glance which said, “It is often thus—never mind it.”

And so it was. Poor Mr. Trueblue was, from constant suffering, so very irritable, that if nothing happened to annoy him, he put him-

self in a passion for some imaginary cause. It would probably have been so now, had not a waiter entered to say the boat would start in five minutes. As he was darting off with professional celerity, Mr. Trueblue called him back.

“What have I got to pay?”

“Five shillings, sir.”

“Five shillings! what for five-pennyworth of brandy?”

“And the use of the room, sir.”

“The use of the room, sir! why I havn’t been ten minutes in the room, sir. You know who I am, sir, and because you do know, you fancy I’m made of money; but I’ll not be imposed upon—there’s a shilling, and that’s double what you ought to get.”

“We’ll see about that, sir; my master’s the person for you to deal with,” said the waiter, doggedly; when, turning round to leave the room, he caught a glimpse of Miss Trueblue holding her purse in her hand, which induced him to

remain, alas! just long enough to receive a rather severe blow from old Trueblue's cane across his shoulder.

He turned sharply round to attack the old man, but Miss Trueblue and Lucilla threw themselves between them, while Tucker rushed in from an adjoining bed-room, armed with salts, eau de Cologne, and a fan. Mr. Trueblue, quite exhausted by his rage and sudden effort, had fallen back in his chair almost insensible.

“I've a great mind to have the law of him,” said the man, rubbing his shoulder—“an old venomous wampire, hitting a man in that way for nothing. It's assault and battery, and nothing less.”

“My father is very ill,” said Miss Trueblue, quietly slipping a sovereign into the man's hand—“be content, and help us down with him.”

“Poor dear old gentleman!” said the waiter,

quite pacified—"not right in his dear old head, I'll be bound."

"Send the coachman and footman here to help my father into the steam-boat."

"Yes, Miss," said the waiter, gladly escaping; "they're used to his ways; he ain't right in his head," he muttered to himself, "but, by jingo, he's strong enough in his arm. What an old serpent it is to be sure."

Lucilla began to have some doubts of the comfort of visiting such an invalid, and began to perceive too how nicely good and evil are balanced in this world, and that Miss Trueblue's wealth has a serious drawback in such a father. As she dwells on her own kind, gentle, endearing parents, she prefers poverty with them to wealth with the poor, vulgar, fretful invalid, now carried by his servants into the saloon of the 'Water Witch.'

Miss Trueblue having administered a sedative, propped him up with pillows, and covered him with shawls and cloaks, took her knitting, as did

Lucilla ; they sate beside him till he was fast asleep, and then Miss Trueblue, summoning Tucker to watch him, took Lucilla's arm, and they left the close and crowded cabin, to enjoy on deck the fresh breeze, the passing vessels, the blue water, and the smiling banks of Father Thames.

CHAPTER XI.

While Lucilla watches with an innocent and young delight the green hills, the smiling villas, the soft ripples, and the sunny sails, herself the unconscious object of a world of cockney admiration ; and while Miss Trueblue takes that pride and pleasure in her friend's beauty which most women do in their own—while old Trueblue sleeps, a sort of surly sleep, in a fur travelling cap, nominally watched by the smart Tucker, who is silently coquetting with many a moustachioed apprentice and clerk, sporting an

imperial of recent growth—while stewards and waiters cover the saloon tables with hams and sirloins, chickens and cheeses, and London's sons and daughters eat and drink till they can eat and drink no more—while Bass's pale ale smiles and sparkles like a pretty blonde in contrast with her rival brunette Brown Stout—and the steam of brandy and water and gin punch poisons the air, and ginger beer makes as much noise and fuss as a would-be-wit, and the vulgar Many grow familiar, and the higher and more refined Few retire into the deck cabins, or, if full, into themselves—we must leave for awhile this little world upon the waters, to inquire what our hero *par excellence*, Sir Felix Archer, has been doing since we saw him last.

He had then, if we remember right, a very important engagement in the gardens of Bedford Square, with her whom he so condescendingly called his “charming and intellectual friend”—her whom he believed ready to die to

serve him—her on whose adoring friendship he had pinned his faith—her for whom he almost felt a little half supercilious regard, and not a little of that sort of interest every middle-aged beau feels, in any handsome and clever girl who persuades him that he is the first and most fascinating of men, and that she thinks him so.

“Poor little Undermine,” he said to his august and egotistical self as he drove to Bedford Square, “how perfect and yet how humble is her devotion ; I hope she will do herself no injury in the plebeian and professional world in which she lives, by this silly and too perceptible adoration of me. I should be sorry to let her injure herself, poor thing, pleasant as I find her meek yet ardent regard ! Yet surely it *is* a dangerous thing for a girl so much beneath one, not only to feel, but to glory in parading, this sort of worship (for it is little less) of such an *enfant gâté des dames* as I am. I must put it to her—women are so blind in

these things—I must ask her, what in her own set would be the feeling of such among her own class as might wish to propose to her, about her passionate friendship for me. Perhaps after all they might think her rather honoured than otherwise by my attentions ; I know so little of the feelings and modes of life and thought of these ‘ quill-drivers.’”

He forgot, yes, even in conferring with himself, that he originally belonged to the very class of which he professed such contemptuous ignorance. He had tried to deceive others on this point, till he had, failing in that, succeeded in deceiving himself.

“ However, there is no nonsense about her ; if she does love me, as I cannot but perceive she does, it is without a particle of hope—a state of things which maximists and moralists coolly tell us is an impossibility. Well, she is an amusing and piquante little girl, and when I am married to the beautiful Lucilla, as they are such great friends, it will be pleasant to

have poor little Undermine staying with us now and then, admiring all I do and say—an unexceptionable companion for Lady Archer, promoting my views, and seconding my wishes in everything; in due time playing with our children—and if this devoted friendship for me makes her, as I foresee it will, despise all other men, and live on unwedded for my sake, she will be useful in a thousand ways, gifted as she is. Half friend, half underling, she can revise my literary productions, correct proofs, sing seconds, take a hand at whist, and teach the children. With her feelings, all this will be a sort of elysium!"

With these thoughts Sir Felix Archer beguiled the way from Portland Place to Bedford Square. He sprang from his cab, resigned the snow-white reins to his expert little tiger, and stepped daintily in his neat and dazzling French boots, to one of the gates of the gardens of the Square.

CHAPTER XII.

From a bench, concealed by ample lilac bushes, and trees of guelder roses, and over which acacias hung their graceful festoons, Miss Lucilla Undermine watched the gate at which she thought it probable Sir Felix would present himself. By her side and holding her hand, in earnest and close converse with her, sate Mr. Rory O'Brien, the countless discrepancies of his attire concealed (although it was the autumn's hot and gorgeous prime) by his cobalt blue cloth cloak with its scarlet shalloon

lining, its catskin collar and ormolu chain and clasp ; his old hat with the bullet-hole in it looked worn and shining, and betrayed in many places that it had been both washed and ironed ; in a stiff black stock he had stuck his gaudy brooch, with the view of Lucerne in its china slab. A thick chain of mosaic gold, and an eye-glass, studded with bits of emerald coloured glass, adorned his unseasonable waistcoat of faded pink plush. The worn button-holes of a green cut-a-way were linked together by a clasp made of two foxes' heads in German silver. His tight shrunken trowsers had once been white ducks ; and his lemon-coloured gloves, by a strong smell of turpentine, and a certain consumptive look a resuscitated glove always has, betrayed the secrets of their recent prison-house. A pair of incipient fawn-coloured moustachios and an imperial to match, completed the odd and disreputable appearance of this strange being. But so great to woman's heart is the power of originality of thought and

superiority of mind, that Miss Lucilla Under-mine looked up to the phosphoric eyes and intelligent lips of this caricature, with “swimming looks of speechless tenderness.” She felt that she, shrewd and gifted as she was, was but a tool in the hands of this strange being—that her growing love for him was fast making Sir Felix and every other man odious to her, and that she was almost ready to resign the game of her destiny to him, to play it out as he chose, and into his hands if he so desired.

As peeping through the lilac bushes, she saw the modish shadow of Sir Felix Archer’s form cast by the setting sun upon the orange colored gravel walk, she hastily snatched her hand from Rory O’Brien’s, and said: “I think I quite understand the game you wish me to play—I will do my best—Farewell.”

“I am off, dear girl,” he said, “do as I bid you, and the queen of hearts will be trumps; the king of diamonds will fall to her, and we shall win the game. I shall expect to have a

line from you to-night at Clifford's Inn, to tell me how you have played your cards. You have the game in your own hands—play it boldly but cautiously to the end. You'll never repent it."

Sir Felix Archer was a little near-sighted, and of course he could not tell that the white muslin drapery, floating on the evening air, glistening in the setting sun, and gleaming through the dark trees, belonged to his "poor little friend." There were other ladies sprinkled about the gardens—a few old ladies, who considered them a safe retreat from the perils of horses and carriages—a few young ones, whose parents thought by locking them into those gardens they were safe from detrimentals—a few sentimental ladies of middle age, with a book and a work-basket—two or three groups of children, and a nursemaid or two—these formed the habitual company of the Square gardens.

But dashing, designing, flirting damsels, like

Miss Lucilla Undermine, were not to be found there ; Kensington gardens and the parks were their favorite resorts ; and so after a few turns and a few deliberate gazes through his eye-glass, Sir Felix's practised eye discerned the form of his " poor friend."

She sate apparently in deep thought, and did not raise her eyes at his approach ; but the consciousness of the deep and double game she was playing curdled the blood in her heart, and for a moment blanched her cheek. Her pallor did not escape our egotistical coxcomb, and gratified vanity softened his voice, as he said : " My sweet Miss Undermine ! my charming friend ! how shall I thank you for this amiable punctuality ?"

At his words, his voice, and the gentle pressure of his hand, the conscious blood flew back to the false one's cheek, and again Sir Felix misconstrued these tell-tale blushes.

He sate beside her, and he delayed (kind and considerate Sir Felix) for a few minutes to

force upon her agitated heart the real object of this meeting. He dreaded to mention his love for another while she trembled thus, although to promote that love he believed her to be there; he feared to name Lucilla Temple, although this appointment was made expressly to discuss and analyse her feelings, and his own hopes, or rather, as he thought, certainty of a delighted acceptance.

The weather, the sun-set, the probability of a fine day on the morrow, were of course discussed. What Englishman was ever fairly launched into conversation without that preface? Then came a gentle inquiry about the lady's health, and thence questions as to the health of all her family. After this Sir Felix, a little seasoned, said: "I need not have asked my lovely friend how she felt, for Hebe might almost envy so delicate a bloom."

"And yet," said the lady, "I am not well."

"Not well?"

"No, I suffer—I suffer much."

Sir Felix did not know what to say, or which way to look. The selfish are generally poor comforters, and in cases where the distresses of others impede their services, are apt to betray more annoyance than sympathy.

At length he did say: “Of what nature are your sufferings, my poor friend, mental or bodily?”

“Both!” said Lucilla, in a hollow tone.

“Both?”

“Yes, both; in fact, Sir Felix, I am torn by conflicting emotions, rent by contending feelings; on one side duty and filial affection reproach me for my clandestine conduct—on the other, confidence in you, and a devotion which is almost idolatry, urge me to commit myself thus.”

“My poor, poor friend!” said Sir Felix, thinking that in the wildness of her passion she had betrayed—that to please and serve him, even in his attachment to another, she risked

her parents' displeasure, the world's misconstructions, and her own disapproval.

"Ah, poor indeed—I deserve pity," she said, "for to love is to suffer, and yet I am rich in a treasure I would not part with for a kingdom!"

"And what, sweet friend, is that treasure?" said Sir Felix, expecting to hear it was his friendship.

"What? Oh, Sir Felix, what? your love—this noble, this disinterested, this deep, deep love, so delicately veiled, so witchingly betrayed!"

Sir Felix turned pale and looked aghast; he positively could not speak.

"It is true," she continued, "there is a disparity, a great disparity in our years, and my parents have other views for me; but this can form no reasonable objection, and is a point that can only concern myself; hearts that love must be young. Some minds never grow old, and souls can never die. Had my friends been

really resolved never to consent, they would not have allowed us to correspond or to meet; they may not quite approve, but they will not finally prevent our union. My sufferings arise from inward struggles about risking the telling them at once what I now see they more than guess."

It was a wonder, a great wonder, that the surprise and shock Sir Felix Archer sustained at this to him astounding speech did not cause him a paralytic stroke. His complexion grew leaden, and the muscles of his face twitched and worked with a ghastly activity over which he had no control. This meek, this humble, this adoring being, whom he had looked upon as the devoted creature of his will and slave of his whims, his attorney's daughter, a girl of no birth, little fortune, plebeian stamp and merely average good looks—to presume to expect not merely to be made Lady Archer, but to have the ineffable insolence to imply that her union with him would be a sacrifice her parents

would not readily consent to. He, too, desperately in love with a girl who, whatever her parents' difficulties might be, bore the unmistakeable stamp of ancient birth upon her beautiful face and form—a girl with that aristocratic bearing, that innate elegance, that inborn taste, that instinct refinement, and that peculiar style of beauty which made her worthy of a coronet, and would have amply excused a Duke for making her his Duchess. When he, the wealthy baronet, has been doubting and debating in his own mind the propriety of sacrificing his precious self to a Lucilla Temple, without title or fortune, to find a little low-born Undermine expecting a proposal from him, and calmly discussing such a frightful sacrifice, as less advantageous to her than to him. There is no knowing how long he might have remained palsied by anger, disdain, and astonishment, had it not suddenly struck him that hopeless love had turned the head of his poor little friend, that she was either permanently disordered in

intellect by her passionate admiration of him, or at least labouring under a great temporary derangement.

This thought calmed him sufficiently to allow of his stealing a glance at her ; she had hidden her face in her handkerchief, and was apparently sobbing.

“He took her hand and said: “Do not weep, fair friend, let us talk of other matters.”

“Yes,” she said wildly, “of other matters ! of Lucilla Temple, whom to induce me not to delay my decision, you have pretended to admire. Ah, Felix, the poor subterfuge will deceive no longer ; even she sees through it— even she has discovered what I knew so well, that those too eloquent verses were addressed to me ! As she said, with more discernment than I gave her credit for : ‘Would he address me as ‘daughter of genius,’ think you ? I who have no pretensions to talent—I whose few poor verses even his politeness could not prevent his condemning, while you do indeed

possess the fatal gift of genius and of song, and he has often extolled your wonderful powers himself.' 'Then,' she added, 'would he remark on the '*ripened*' charms of one who to him must seem a mere child—at his age (here Sir Felix winced) a wife of two-and-twenty seems unsuitably young, but one of seventeen absurdly so! Are my eyes 'darkly bright?' can my golden locks be described as 'soft brown hair'—my girlish figure as a 'Juno-form'—and is there in this strange world any man so very a coxcomb, as to address in such impertinent and sanguine language a young lady with whom he has never been on terms of intimacy—who has never felt for, or shown him the slightest preference—never encouraged, never flirted with him—one to whom he seems so elderly and staid that she would as soon think of marrying her great uncle—and who besides has already given her heart to one young enough to be his grandson! No, no,' she said, 'even mamma has remarked his devotion to you. And who

that sees and hears you, love, can marvel at it? If you can consent to barter for wealth and title your youth, your genius and your beauty, do ; but I who have only the former, and a smaller share of the latter, I should laugh in his face.' ”

“ Do you mean to say,” said Sir Felix, trembling with passion, that Miss Temple made those remarks, when you showed her my verses ? ”

“ Oh, yes, and many more ! she made such fun of you and them, ridiculous hoyden that she is ! that I quarrelled with her, she declared the verses were taken out of an old lady’s museum for 1700, and teased me about being an ‘ old man’s darling,’ and got up and hobbled and said :—

“ The old man he comes grumbling in,
I’m weary of my life ;
The young man he comes jumping in,
Come kiss me, my dear wife.”

“I had no idea she was so vulgar, and such a mimic too. However, seeing she had found us out, I owned our attachment, and told her that if she did not show you proper respect for your own sake she must and should for mine ; and then she begged my pardon and wished me joy, and said, ‘how curious it would be if I were to marry one who had once been in the firm’—and told me all the story of her own love affair, and how she is going to Ramsgate to stay with *his* friends—indeed she is there now, I believe ; but all this was in strict confidence, so you must not betray me ; only of course I have no secrets from you now, and never will have !”

During this speech an intense hatred of ‘his poor friend’ had stolen into Sir Felix’s heart. The many falsehoods she had strung beside some pearls of truth, were so adroitly introduced, and had so natural and real an air, that Sir Felix did not doubt them, and he was already planning in his heart a tour on the

continent, a total resignation of Lucilla Temple, and a final break up of all acquaintance with the Undermines, and this now odious and detested girl. He rose, and dissembling his wrath and his revenge, he said: "I will write to you my sentiments on what you have been good enough to tell me—Farewell."

"No, no," cried the lady, clinging to his arm, "you do not go! you cannot go! you must take me to my parents, and tell them that if I have endangered my reputation and perilled my fame by meeting you thus clandestinely and alone at this late hour, it is because we are engaged—that they *must* sanction our union now!—now that if they do not do so, the world will wrong their child! Come with me; they will not be cruel—we will kneel together—come!"

"A faint glimmer of some deep scheme to entangle him, now dawned on Sir Felix's rather obtuse brain; his anger got the better of him as he said:—

“ Madam, you know full well that I have never given you any reason to hope that I should make you my wife.”

“ Oh, wretch ! oh, barbarian !” shrieked the lady—“ do you mean to imply, false viper, whom I have fostered in my poor, warm, unsuspecting heart, that a daughter of the house of Undermine ever admitted any addresses but those of the most honourable nature.”

“ I mean, madam,” said Sir Felix, grinding his teeth and digging his heel into the gravel, “ that I never paid you any addresses of any nature whatever.”

“ Then why am I here ?” asked the lady, wildly.

“ Why ? to discuss with me the propriety of offering myself to another—to your friend.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !” laughed, with a well-acted hysterical phrenzy, the designing damsel. “ No, no, Sir Felix, a woman may risk name and fame for her own lover, but not for another’s. I do not deny that you wooed and won me

under a flimsy veil we both smiled at, and possibly, now you have won my love, you may be weary of it. The mere circumstance that it is yours may make you prefer another, now too that you have compromised me. You are well known to be faithless, Sir Felix ; many a weak girl weeps over your perfidy ; but I am no weakling—I am no coward !”

Her agitated manner and hysterical shrieks attracted the attention of the ladies in the garden, many of whom drew nearer.

“ Hush,” said Sir Felix, “ you attract attention.”

“ I will attract the world’s attention to your matchless treachery, your ineffable falsehood, your insolent inconstancy,” shrieked the lady. “ Come with me to my father, and own our attachment.”

“ How completely I have been taken in and bamboozled,” thought Sir Felix ; “ however I must get out of this absurd position as soon as possible.”

Sir Felix was a sort of man who dreaded a laugh more than a loss. He had not self-confidence and self-respect enough to brave the ridicule of fools; he might have said with the Frenchman—“*Je crains le rire moqueur plus que la mort.*” He was in a positive fever, at the glances and remarks his companion’s frantic manner elicited among the ladies in the garden, many of whom he could see nudging each other, and drawing as near the scene of action as politeness permitted. His great object was to get away, but how to effect this, without a still more violent scene, he knew not. At length he said:—

“We can discuss this subject better by letter, Miss Undermine—it is growing late—I fear I must leave you now!” And he rose.

“Leave me, sir!” cried the lady—“leave me! a young and defenceless girl, here clandestinely, and at your earnest prayer—leave me to make my way alone and unprotected to my outraged and justly incensed parents!”

“I shall commit you still further if I see you home,” said Sir Felix, hastening away.

But with a wild shriek the lady darted after him, calling him aloud ; and as he still sped on, she took the opportunity, when near a group of elderly maiden ladies, to sink on the turf as if in a fainting fit.

The ladies screamed and rushed to her assistance, rejoiced to have an interest in any kind of love affair, and glad of any romantic incident to agitate a little the even current of their life of confirmed spinsterhood, nor were they sorry to have an opportunity of venting on one individual of the bachelor race, those wrongs and slights and perfidies each had to complain of from *mankind* in general. While some raised Miss Lucilla Undermine, others tried to arrest the progress of Sir Felix.

“Stop, sir !” cried one.

“In the name of common humanity, stop ! the lady has fainted,” cried another.

“If you are a man, stop! Inhuman being!” shouted a third.

But still on he sped; he reached the gate. Ha! is the old fox trapped at last? it is locked!

The last person who went out secured it, and Sir Felix has no key! A little shout of triumph escaped the ladies, as Sir Felix cast a hopeless glance at the tall iron gates, and one, more hopeless still, at the form of Miss L. Under-mine, supported by one group of ladies, while another advances towards him. What was to be done now? He put himself in an attitude and assumed an expression he believed to be, and had often found, irresistible, and then he stepped daintily and deferentially forward to meet the vanguard of the little batallion.

“I make no apology for addressing you, sir,” said one lady, “because I suspect from your having evidently no key, that you are an intruder here, a trespasser on our rights and indeed on our premises, since these are not

public gardens, but appropriated to the use of such as dwell in the adjoining mansions, and pay for the keeping up of these grounds. Will you oblige us by stating your right here?"

"I was admitted, Madam, by a friend who, having a key and residing in the neighbourhood, was, I trust, justified in admitting me."

"Certainly; may we ask who that friend is? It behoves us particularly to be very sure what sort of people gain access to grounds where we wander in imagined security."

"I shall not endanger the sanctity of these gardens, still less will my friend do so. Allow me egress now I beg. That lady will, I am sure, satisfy you about both her respectability and mine."

"The lady with whom we saw you conversing just now, sir, if it be she to whom you allude, sir, is in no state to be questioned; she has fainted," said one tall commanding spinster, with a ferocious-looking black front, coming up like a tragedy queen; "where is she to be

conveyed? It is scarcely manly, sir, to leave her in such a state to the protection and assistance of timid and defenceless, though sympathizing ladies, who not knowing who she is, or the nature of the wrong you have evidently done her, cannot tell how far they may endanger their own spotless fame by rendering her any assistance!"

"I heard the lady call after you by the name of Sir Felix Archer," said another—"a name but too well known to the credulous and unwary of an ill-treated and defenceless sex!"

"How heartless and treacherous is man," sighed a lady of thirty-nine, dressed in white, with a broad green silk sash, and a straw gipsy hat, tied with green ribbon.

"Ladies," said Sir Felix, with a deprecating smile, and appearing to tremble and almost crouch before them, "do not be severe upon me, nor mistake for guilt the awe I naturally feel in the presence of so much virtue, talent, and beauty."

“Sir,” said the first spinster, with the fero-cious black front, “to flatter *us* is not to justify *yourself*.” This lady was a great reader of Johnson, and had imbibed at once something of his masculine intellect, and antithesis of expression ; but even she was a little softened by Sir Felix’s humility of manner, and adulatory language. “I ask you, sir, who and what is the unfortunate lady so lately and so evidently receiving you and sitting by you, as none but an affianced woman (if of character) ever does ? and now after having in vain tried to arrest your flight, now lying in a fainting fit upon yonder bench—a fainting which proves at once the weakness of woman’s nature and the strength of man’s duplicity, or perhaps the strength of woman’s love, and the weakness of man’s faith. Now, sir, I ask you again, is your desertion of that lady of such a nature as to render her no fit visitor in these gardens, and no proper object of our sympathy ?”

“She is as spotless as yourselves ; the cause

of our little disagreement is absurd and intricate ; but I am not to blame—the lady is under a delusion, that is all.”

“A delusion as to your sentiments and intentions, I suppose you mean, sir.”

“Exactly, Madam. In confidence, this unhappy lady attributes to me motives and feelings I never entertained.”

“The old story,” sighed the lady in white and green.

“Plausible treachery!” said another.

But the disciple of Johnson, said : “Was this lady here by appointment to meet you, sir, at this hour, and unknown to her friends?”

“She was—but——”

“But what, sir?”

“It is so delicate a subject——”

“So is a woman’s peace, her name, and fame. Proceed, sir.” All crowded round with faces sharpened by curiosity.

“Well, then, ladies, heaven knows what my poor friend may have hoped——”

“Hoped, indeed!” said the spinsters, with a toss of their heads.

“Well, I withdraw the expression, as unguarded and unsuitable; but have some mercy”—and he glanced at the key with which each lady was armed. “What I mean to say is, that in this hurried moment I cannot explain or account for my poor friend’s mistake; but that I came here to consult her about the propriety of my addressing her friend!”

“Her friend!” almost screamed the ladies, in their surprise at what they believed to be the mockery and insolent effrontery of this invention.

“Sir,” said Miss Martinet, the Johnsonian lady, “I am surprised that if you have the treachery to frame, you have the effrontery to proffer, so paltry and absurd an explanation.”

“A counterpart of the conduct of Orlando,” murmured to herself her of the white robe and green sash.

“A palpable invention,” said another; “did

I not see you kiss her hand? Is that the way a gentleman and man of honor offers himself to one's friend?"

"Besides," said a fourth, "to cut the matter short—when we raised her, she said, in a frantic manner: 'Stop him—he is my affianced! he would desert and deceive me, now I have perhaps incensed and estranged my parents by meeting him thus. He is a man of title and fortune, and I am his affianced.' Saying this she again fainted away; and indeed but for this you might have left these gardens, sir, where you seem to me to be an intruder on our privileges, without our deigning to interfere."

"Here comes the poor lady herself, supported by Miss Primrose and Miss Lamb," said another; "now we shall probably hear the rights of this."

But at this moment a Parisian governess, warranted not to speak English, who came from one of the houses in the Square in search of her

pupils, and was armed with a key, unlocked the gate. Sir Felix, though he stood with his back to the gate, heard the key turn in the lock. The ladies for a moment were intent solely on scrutinizing, criticising, and commiserating the deserted damsel, who came forth with tottering steps, and dishevelled hair, leaning on two of her new-made friends. At this critical moment the Parisian governess opened the gate, and herself stood gazing in amazement at the scene before her. Sir Felix seized the moment, turned, darted to the gate; the surprised and terrified Mademoiselle La Grace drew back, with an—“*Ah, mon Dieu ! qu'est ce que c'est que cela donc ! Mon Dieu ! que les Anglais sont impolis ! est il permis de se presenter ainsi ? Il m'a presque renversé ce malhonnête ; ah, que je voudrais être de retour à Paris ! Vilains Anglais—vilain pays ! Je les abhorre !*”

While poor Mademoiselle La Grace was soliloquizing thus, her little French face flushed and her black eyes flashing, Sir Felix had

gained the outside of the gate. Vainly the ladies cried, “do not let him out!”—“lock the gates!”—“stop him!” The Parisian probably did not understand them, and probably would not have heeded them if she had ; her French *amour propre* had frequently been wounded during her wretched fortnight in London, by the hauteur and ridicule with which the spinsters of the gardens treated any little advance of hers towards acquaintanceship, when in her forlorn and unfriended state, sitting for hours on a bench, while her pupils romped in the gardens, and sighed for “*cette chère, cette belle France*,” and over “*un destin trop sévère*,” she had with the humility of the miserable tried to make a friend, and hazarded a remark on the weather, or a courteous resignation of her seat, a rude stare and a “*nous je remercie vous*” had been her sole return from those who, like Chaucer’s abbess, were

“ Well versed in French of Bowe,
Tho’ French of Paris, they did never knowe ;”

and this was followed by rude whispers and titters, announcing their hatred of her as a Frenchwoman, and their scorn of her as a governess.

It was therefore no marvel, that she took no pains to ascertain what their exclamations meant, nor what their wishes were.

“ C'est probablement quelqu' affaire de cœur avec une de ces détestables Anglaises,” she said to herself. *“ Le Monsieur fait bien de se sauver ! ce n'est pas moi qui l'arrêtera elles ont beau crier ! Le voilà dans son cabriolet ; il les salue én triomphant ! cela me rejouit ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! c'est la première fois depuis que je suis à Londres que je ris de bon cœur ! Allons, Mademoiselles Pemberton, il faut rentrer prendre le thé.”*

But it was some time before the three Misses Pemberton, tall, raw-boned girls, from twelve to fifteen, with their hair tied in clubby plaits, and wearing round straw hats, black spencers, white shorts and frilled trowsers, and armed with

skipping ropes and hoops, could be torn away from a sort of ambush whence they were watching the whole scene, and making faces at every one concerned. Poor Miss La Morale had to hunt, dodge, threaten, and coax them, a weary chace, that of a French woman of forty-five, *un peu poitrinaire*, after three self-willed English girls from twelve to fifteen—active in mischief, and quarreling in everything else, but united in rebellious mockery of Mademoiselle.

At length, baffled in straight-forward warfare, she had recourse to *ruse*.

“ *Miladi, va au spectacle*,” she cried, “ *et elle y menera celle qui a été la plus sage d'entre vous ! Miladi fait sa toilette et la voiture attend.*”

At this all these hoydens were arrested, and followed poor Mademoiselle, crying out: “ *Chère Mademoiselle ! parlez pour moi ! Chère chose ! voulez vous ! s'il vous plaît !* And so, by very questionable means, she ushered them into the presence of an austere mother and father, out of

temper for some private reason, and then pouring out her wrongs and their impertinences in rapid and passionate French, they received some severe boxes on the ear from their papa, and were by their mamma sent supperless to bed. And poor Mademoiselle, thus released from her odious charge, went to take her coffee with a French *modiste*, her only friend, and with her to the French theatre, when she forgot awhile in the fulness of her national enjoyment, heightened by the attentions of two or three moustachioed beaux, and a bonbonnière full of jujubes, and *bon-bons de Malte*, “*la revolution, la méchaniete, et la perfidie des hommes*, (for she had been jilted) *cette vilaine Angleterre, les abominables Anglais, et les detestables Anglaises!* *Surtout cette famille Pemberton, qu'elle avait un horreur !*”

But while we have been attending to poor Mademoiselle, the type of the unprincipled but oppressed race of inferior French governesses,

we have left the spinster ladies, outwitted, defeated, and aghast !

They can scarcely believe their eyes, until from under the dark hood of the cab which had been awaiting him, they see Sir Felix Archer wave his hand (gloved in light grey kid) in token of triumphant farewell.

After a pause, however, they agree that this confirms *his* perfidy and the lady's statement.

“ He who so dreads to be confronted with his accuser, and flies from her presence—tacitly acknowledges his guilt,” said Miss Martinet.

“ Orlando too escaped !” murmured Miss Willow.

“ Poor thing,” exclaimed the others, “ she is weeping ; that detestable French governess has caused this defeat. Let us go to the poor victim.”

“ We are come to counsel and to condole,” said Miss Martinet. “ Women are an oppressed and outraged race ; but union is strength, and

were we united, we might still make some head against our oppressors. Those who are known to be ready to resent and to resist, are not likely to be called upon to submit. Tell us your tale. All women are fellow-sufferers from the tyranny and perfidy of man, and where there is a community of suffering there ought to be one of *resistance*."

"My tale is soon told, noble-minded and gifted ladies," said Miss Undermine, sobbing. "My name is Lucilla Undermine; I am the daughter of a most respectable and wealthy solicitor in Bedford Row. Sir Felix Archer, my treacherous affianced, formerly was a partner of my father's, but having retired from the law, now is only a client of our firm. Both my father and my brother look upon him as their bosom friend! Alas! what a viper have they warmed in their unsuspecting breasts!"

Here she wept.

And "Villain!" and "Poor thing!" were repeated in chorus.

“He has been twice a widower,” she continued, “and of course is skilled to win. To be brief, he has latterly distinguished me by a most flattering preference, and by most pointed attentions. My parents wished me to favour another, but my own heart decided for Felix. At his own passionate entreaty I have received him alone, corresponded with him, dined at his house with no chaperon but my brother, and to-night met him, as I believed, to name the day that was to put a period to my power and to his sufferings.”

“Just where they always fall off!” said one lady.

“Just like Orlando,” sighed Miss Willow.

“Well, we had had a little joke about a young school-girl, a pretty little nimble friend of mine, and named like me Lucilla. In the innocent confidence of my heart, knowing my lover’s taste for beauty, and disposition to flirt with every pretty woman, which you ladies must have seen in his conduct to yourselves, I

used to joke him about this child, for she is little else."

"And he has forsaken you for her?" asked Miss Willow, eagerly.

"Why, no, I cannot think that; I do not believe his desertion can have even the poor excuse of sudden preference for another. What I believe is, that his delight is in the chase, that the heart he has won he no longer cares for; his verses, letters, and presents to *me* are all addressed simply "to Lucilla;" and when after vainly urging him to ease my heart from this clandestine engagement, and go with me openly and kneel to my father, I taxed him with them, he had the face to tell me, they were meant for my friend and namesake, and that all his attentions to me had reference to her! You cannot marvel at the state this threw me into."

"I wonder you did not tear his eyes out!" said one.

“There is yet redress for *you* and punishment for *him*!” said Miss Martinet.

“Alas! there is no redress for the heart,” sighed Miss Willow.

“You will not tamely submit to be jilted?” said another.

“Ladies!” said Miss Undermine, rising and pushing back her hair—I have done with grief, and now for vengeance! I am a child of the law, bred in its bosom, reared in its arms; copying clerks rocked my cradle; articled clerks danced me on their knees; Blackstone and Coke have been to me what Byron and Moore are to other girls; and I have often hidden them under my pillow. Child of the law—the law shall protect and avenge me!”

“Bravo! bravo!” cried all; “we will stand by you.”

“If,” said Miss Martinet, “woman’s weak subserviency did not generally render the theft of her peace an unpunishable felony, perfidy and desertion would cease to be, and bachelors

and spinsters would be names unknown save where, as in my own case, a woman feels a natural scorn and antipathy to the unfair sex."

"It is late and I must go home!" said Lucilla.

"Let us meet here to-morrow!" said the ladies.

And several cards were proffered and accepted. Lucilla Undermine handed her own in return.

"We will appear as witnesses *for* you and *against* him," said Miss Martinet. "She were a poor champion of her sex who refused to bear witness in public to the treachery of man in private life; and that sympathy is of little avail which, while it is ready with words of condolence, shrinks from an act of justice."

"Farewell, then, till to-morrow!" said Miss Undermine solemnly; "accept my best thanks; your counsel decides, your sympathy supports, you witness will probably decide the verdict.

I shall no longer seek to recover his affections, but I shall seek to *recover damages!* and damages I believe I shall recover of no trifling amount. Farewell. He revels in the breach he has made between my parents and me, in the breach of faith he has so heartlessly committed; let us see how he will relish the next breach he will be concerned in—an action brought by Lucilla Undermine, spinster, against Sir Felix Archer, widower, to recover compensation in damages, for a BREACH OF PROMISE OF MARRIAGE!"

CHAPTER XIII.

While bitter feelings, contending interests, and coming events of great importance, engross the attention of the Undermines, Sir Felix Archer, and Mr. Rory O'Brien, Barrister of the Inner Temple, Lucilla, with all the exquisite enjoyment of early girlhood, is revelling in the varied delights of a fine autumn by the sea-side.

Ramsgate happened on this particular season to be well attended, full indeed of very tolerable company. Bathing, riding, driving, sailing, attending the promenades and the libraries, all were sources of new and intense delight to

Lucilla—of perfect delight indeed, for after a few days spent in a whirl of new amusements, just when her “heart distrusting asks if this be joy?” the young artist arrived at Ramsgate, took lodgings on the Fort very near their own—and the question was answered in the affirmative.

The letters Lucilla received from her home were all of the most hopeful and comforting nature; her mother gained strength daily, Tom had turned over a new leaf, not only in his book, but in his conduct, and took a sort of pride in supplying to his parents his sister’s place. How long this would last no one of course could tell, but as Lucilla’s absence was not to be a very long one, perhaps it might endure that time, and that would be a great comfort to all parties. The only doubt on Lucilla’s heart, the only cloud on her happiness, was the question conscience would ask again and again—‘Would her parents receive the young artist as her suitor?’ When in his presence, she

looked at him and felt sure they must see him with her eyes; but when alone, fears and doubts prevailed, and then she rushed to Miss Trueblue, who was ever the young artist's warmest champion.

It was a lovely day, and our friends agreed to go down on the sands, (then a delightful promenade) and discuss together all that weighed on poor Lucilla's heart. As they walked along —purposely avoiding the approach of the admirers of wealth and beauty—Miss Trueblue said :—

“ I do not advise you to write about him—wait till you can present him to your parents; one glance at his honest and noble face will do away with all prejudices against artists and foreigners.”

“ Ah, dear friend,” Lucilla would reply, “ you do not know how deeply rooted those prejudices are !”

“ Yes, to a thorough-bred foreigner, of foreign habits and language, and of the Roman Catholic

religion, but surely our dear friend, more than half English, protestant, speaking our own language like ourselves, and so truly English in tastes, feelings, and habits—indeed, Lucilla, I can see no objection they can have, unless indeed they expect that your beauty and talents will restore you and them to their natural position in society, and I must own if, when they find your happiness is concerned, they let any other consideration weigh much with them, they will not prove themselves the excellent parents I believe them to be!"

"I should have more hope were it not for this kind, this excellent Mr. Stanley, my father's young benefactor and best friend, as I told you. Papa says he has seen me, and (do not think me vain, for indeed I deplore it much) that from what he said and the way in which he said it, papa is sure he has taken a fancy to me. Papa's admiration of and gratitude to him are boundless. I believe he would rather give me to him than to any one else in the world, and that

nothing could happen so delightfully in accordance with his wishes as my marrying Mr. Stanley."

"Well then, dearest, had you not better see him and try to love him."

"What!" cried Lucilla, turning pale and starting, "what, Miss Trueblue, did love ever come with trying after it, and do you, who know the secret of my heart and have watched its progress—do you believe that I can ever, ever feel the slightest interest in any man on earth save di Moricini?"

"But yet you own that at one time, had he proposed, you would have accepted Sir Felix Archer."

"Yes, I believe I might have done so, but then I had never loved—never thought. My parents thinking (a common error I believe) that if so wealthy and important a person as Sir Felix offered himself and his all to their poor girl, he must have a good and noble heart, were very desirous to see me restored to that

place in society they had lost, and to behold me not merely secured for ever from all the miseries of want and dependence, but possessed of such ample power to do good—and I, heart-whole and fancy-free, almost began to wish what they wished ; however I have often made you laugh over the failure of the first matrimonial speculation ever made for me, and I must own that at that dreadful dinner Sir Felix appeared so very unamiable that something like disgust stole into my heart, accompanied by a good deal of mortification that I should ever have tried to please one who so evidently despised us all. When with singular caprice Sir Felix again seemed disposed to realize my poor parents' hopes, I was a new being—you know the magic that had changed me—to be empress of the universe I would not have smiled on Sir Felix then. But from the past I had learned not to attach too much importance to his attentions and flatteries, and unwilling to offend one who might be a valuable friend to my family, I

received him with the courtesy due to his rank and the attention his apparent friendship deserved; but I was with inexcusable vanity beginning again to take alarm at his seemingly great admiration and marked partiality, when I luckily discovered that he meant nothing, could mean nothing, for that he was desperately in love with Lucilla Undermine, to whom he paid most marked attention in my presence, and who (perhaps at his request) showed me some verses he had written to her, containing not merely the most impassioned love, but a proposal of marriage."

"Ah!" said the shrewd Miss Trueblue, "there is something in all that I cannot fathom; I fancy Renard Undermine must be deeply concerned; I *can* believe that the sort of man you describe Sir Felix to be, might fall in love with Lucilla Temple, might resolve to make the loveliest girl in England Lady Archer—might bid, as he would at an auction perhaps, half his fortune for the Medicinal Venus! With your

beauty, your birth, grace, tact and talents, were you a beggar in rags, I could still understand it, and see the selfish Sybarite even in such a choice ; but that he should select so commonplace, so plebeian, so every-day a person as Lucilla Undermine—with no more beauty than every other English girl of her class in good health may boast—no style, or rather, worse still, a bad style—no connexion except that which Sir Felix would fain forget, and with such a little old pettyfogging papa, basket-woman mamma, port professional brother, and sisters remarkable only for what would surely excrimate him, ‘vulgar dash’—I never *can* believe that there is not some deep trickery of Master Renard’s at the bottom of all this, and I feel intense curiosity to see how it will all end.”

“ Well I, for my part, believe that Miss Lucilla Undermine, rather by her genius than her beauty, has made a conquest of Sir Felix. I think he wishes to marry, and perhaps had

some thoughts of me before he fell in love with her."

"Fell in love with her ! Lucilla, I am ten years older than you, and I have a hump—the ten years have given me experience, the hump has taught me distrust ; added to this, I am naturally shrewd and practical, while you are imaginative and poetical ; come into the tent and let us look at the papers, or rather while I see who is born, dead, and married, you can watch the waves wooing the shells on the beach, and behold yon crested warrior bringing a seaweed coronal to the feet of some bathing nymph. In half an hour papa will have had his warm bath, and then we must walk by his chair up and down the parade—tedious work for you, dear !"

"Oh no, it is never tedious to soothe those who love us and whom we love."

"And he does love you, Lucilla—the only person besides myself he seems to care for, cross as he is to both of us !"

While Lucilla watched the waves and the glittering beach, Miss Trueblue ran her eye over the papers—a little exclamation escaped her—she remained for a few minutes intent upon a paragraph in the Morning Post, and then, with a little exultation of manner, as one who would say ‘was I not right?’ she put the paper into Lucilla’s hand.

Lucilla’s hoping violet eyes slowly distended into a look of amazement as she read, and the orient blush of quick surprise mantled her cheek. The paragraph ran thus:—

“BREACH OF PROMISE OF MARRIAGE.

“It is rumoured that a *fracas* has taken place in high life, which will ere long furnish employment to the gentlemen of the long robe. The defendant is a well known and gay Lothario, a baronet of great fashionable importance and immense wealth, who does not live a hundred miles from Portland Place, and has hitherto been so petted by the fair, as to have deserved

the epithet of *Felix*, while as one of Cupid's marksmen he might be termed, *par excellence*, '*the Archer*.' This distinguished cavalier has been twice married to beauties of fortune, and to console his doubly-widowed heart, after fluttering through many a season from fair to fair, and raising hopes only to disappoint them, he at length fixed his affections on the young, the gifted, and incomparably beautiful daughter of his friend and late partner, a certain eminent solicitor. Report says that the lady was wooed and won, the day fixed, the wedding clothes and jewels bought, and the friends of both parties bidden "to haste to the wedding," when the gentleman suddenly changed his mind, and the lady her orange wreath for the willow. Her parents, much against her own will, insist on her bringing this action. We hear that the gifted and eloquent Mr. R. O'B. conducts the case for the plaintiff, and Sergeant F—— and Mr. S—— are retained as counsel for the defendant. The affair engrosses all the attention

of the fashionable world, where the defendant is so well known. The damages we hear are laid at £20,000 ! We regret to add, the unhappy, young, and lovely plaintiff is said to be dangerously ill. The defendant gave a party last week at his elegant mansion, in Portland Place, and seemed in high health and spirits, and quite confident that the learned Sergeant (one of his guests) would bear him safely and triumphantly through."

Lucilla read this paragraph twice through before she returned the paper to Miss True-blue.

"Wonderful!" at length she said.

"By no means, my dear," replied her more experienced friend. "I told you there was some mystery, and now I begin to find the clue to it; however, not to be uncharitable, I will say no more at present, but I think I see through it. There is a secret here."

"A very common one, I believe," said Lucilla. "Sir Felix, like men we read of in

novels, grew weary of the love he had won ; his inconstancy is the *secret* of all this. Thank heaven, I am not its victim ! But how can any woman bring such an action against any man ? Much as I revere my parents, nothing they could do would induce me to sue a man for money, to pay me for the loss of his love—how can her parents require it ! how can she consent !”

“ I believe they all rejoice in it—I believe her father to be not a respectable solicitor, who looks upon the law as the handmaid of justice, but a little mean pettifogger, delighted to make the worse appear the better cause.”

“ But the poor girl herself ?”

“ Is a scheming and unprincipled creature ; but I said I would not be severe—time will show.”

“ Do you think she will recover these enormous damages ?”

“ What £20,000 ? Not I ; I believe the

damages will be ‘one farthing.’ See this other paper.”

“ The celebrated Sir Felix Archer, in spite of the peculiar position in which he finds himself, entertained a distinguished party to dinner last evening at his mansion in Portland Place. Among the guests were Sergeant Ferret, Mr. and Mrs. Temple of Temple Grove and family, the Marchioness of Hauteville, Mr. Ogle, M.P. and the Misses Ogle, the Marchese di Terra-incognita, the Baron Von Holstein Von Remberger, Lady Maltston, the Rev. Mr. Temple, &c. &c. &c. Sir Felix was in high spirits and excellent health, and the party was unusually animated.”

A little lower down was another.

“ We regret to state that the young and beautiful daughter of Mr. Undermine, of the highly respectable firm of Undermine, Twist, Twine, Twin, and Undermine, solicitors of Bedford Row, continues in a precarious state of health. The position of this young lady (com-

elled by her father's inflexible resolve and rigid sense of justice to appear as plaintiff in a court of law, to recover compensation in damages for a Breach of Promise against a certain gay and wealthy Baronet) is peculiarly trying, and it is reported that the struggle between duty and inclination have caused her present severe illness. The sympathy she excites is so intense and universal, that not merely all her friends, but many strangers of distinction, have sent to inquire after her. It is rumoured that a footman in the royal livery was seen at the door of her abode yesterday, and a royal carriage drove up in the afternoon. The last report was that the young lady was better, and after a few hours' sleep had requested an interview with her father, and agreed to appear in court as plaintiff. All who have heard of this determination, while they sympathize in her sufferings, applaud her resolution. The damages are expected to be very heavy. The immense wealth of the defendant, the lucidity

of the case, and the great public injury done to the plaintiff, insure heavy damages.

“ The plaintiff’s father seems to rely on the justice of his daughter’s cause, for he has confided it solely to a young barrister of the sister country, distinguished for genius and legal lore, but comparatively little known in this country. The more wily defendant has engaged the celebrated Sergeant Ferret, with whom we hear will be Mr. Snarl. Few similar cases ever engrossed such a share of public attention.”

“ Poor girl! I say again,” exclaimed Lucilla.

“ Wily baggage! I say,” replied Miss True-blue. “ But see, here comes papa in his wheel chair—come, this is news that will make him laugh—he knows a good deal of the Under-mines. Oh, he will enjoy this—*allons, ma belle!*”

CHAPTER XIV.

By the side of old Trueblue's wheel chair walked the young artist, rendering to the captious and complaining old invalid every attention a feeling heart could prompt, and amply repaid by the pleasure of finding himself (though growled at and scolded by old Trueblue) within the light of Lucilla's approving eyes and Miss Trueblue's smile of filial thankfulness.

“Don’t lean on my chair—you make it unsteady,” said old Trueblue, pushing away the young artist’s hand.

“Indeed,” replied the young man kindly, “I did it to guide and support it.”

“To guide and support yourself you mean,” muttered the old man. “Tabitha! where are you, child? how is it I can never have you with me?”

Meekly Miss Trueblue hastened to her father’s side.

“How do you feel now, dearest?” she said.

“Worse,” he replied; “nothing injures me so much as being alone all day.”

All day! he had been one hour at the baths, and the whole morning before and during a great part of the night his daughter had been anxiously tending him.

“Alone, papa!” she said, tenderly taking his hand.

“Yes, alone!” he said, feebly struggling to take away his wasted hand, on which the glove looked large and loose. “But I must expect to be alone I suppose! to live alone and die alone! I’m no company for any one now. I dare say

it's quite natural for my own child, the idol and darling of my heart, to get out of my way, to shun and reproach me. Oh, quite ! quite—I'm used to it—it's to be expected."

Miss Trueblue, nettled at the injustice of this remark, was about to make some exculpatory reply, and a little sense of injustice coloured her thin cheek ; but looking at her father she saw the large tears roll over his loose hanging and lemon-coloured cheeks—tears he was too helpless to wipe away—and at the sight all anger changed into contrite love and filial piety.

" Why don't I go on the pier ?" he asked querulously, when his daughter had gently wiped his cheeks and pressed his hand to her lips. " I suppose you and Miss Temple want to see all these puppies, and so I must be jolted along any how. Confound it, Job ! if you give me such another jolt as that, I'll discharge you on the spot."

"Let us go on the pier," said Lucilla, amiably anxious the old man should have his way.

"Thank you, Miss Temple," he said spitefully; "thank you for interceding for me with my own child; I suppose now we shall go on the pier."

Miss Trueblue cast up her eyes in patient appeal, and the party proceeded to the pier.

And they did go on the pier, and Miss Trueblue and Lucilla beguiled the way by an amusing account of what they had read in the papers.

Old Trueblue knew something of Sir Felix Archer, and something of the Undermines, just enough to give him a great interest in, and an intense relish for, this tale of scandal; and to a deep and moral observer, it was painful to see one so evidently on the brink of eternity, taking so keen an interest and delight in the scrape they all seemed to be in, and laughing over Sir Felix's probable damages, till a fit of

coughing nearly sent him into that world he seemed so ill prepared for.

When he recovered, he said angrily: "By the bye, what's the reason I never see the papers? I'm sure I pay enough. Take in the Times, the Post, and the Herald, and never see one of them."

"They are always on the breakfast table," said Lucilla.

"Are they, Miss; then I should wish to have one at least, Tabitha, sent up into my room; I suppose you think I have no concern with the world now. Don't touch my chair, sir."

The young artist withdrew his hand, which he had extended to assist it over a roughness in the path, and the next moment old Trueblue was overturned!

The dismay of Job, and the alarm of Miss Trueblue, the artist, and Lucilla were extreme, and old Trueblue, though not seriously hurt, chose out of spite to remain for some time as if insensible. When at length they raised

the chair, and himself closely packed therein, growls and groans were exchanged, alas ! for threats and curses at Job, and bitter complaints against the trio in attendance on him, accompanied by hints that he was going fast enough—there was no need to hurry him out of the world—he had one foot in the grave already, and so on.

What brings the quick vermillion to Miss Trueblue's cheek—what makes her lip quiver and her voice tremble, and yet induces her to resolve, in spite of her father's contrariness and complaints, to turn back, and not go to the end of the pier ? Lucilla knew, perhaps the young artist knew, but old Trueblue had been so suddenly turned round in his chair that he did not know.

Nor was he likely to discover. At the pier-head, seated on the parapet of stone, a gaudy figure in many colors, with long hair, black and scented moustachios and imperial, dressed in the extreme of vulgar fashion, with a white hat, a

horsewhip, a pair of spurs, and a cigar, sate the idol of poor Tabitha Trueblue's secret heart—the handsome, tall, and showy vulgarian, Frederick Vernon Smirk. Oh, had old Trueblue but seen that, by him, dreaded and detested being, how soon would he have been roused from a sort of grumbling apathy into deadly rage. The mere mention made him livid with anger, and quake with vindictive emotion. The mere suspicion that Tabitha cherished a fond remembrance of him had more than once endangered his life. Well might filial terror mingle with the fluttering surprise and ecstacy of poor Tabitha! Well might she fear even to recognise her lover till her father was safe in his arm-chair by the fire no degree of heat induced him to dispense with, and which he was inconsiderate enough to expect his daughter and Miss Temple to endure with closed windows, from which they could see the soft wind of early autumn swelling the sun-lit sails, and sporting with the ripples on the beach, and the muslin draperies of the young

and free fluttering like their happy hearts ; and while within all was heat and gloom, without all looked fresh, and bright, and glad.

But like most invalids, old Trueblue was very uncertain—at times so inconsiderate and selfish as almost to provoke to resistance, and at others so yielding, self-sacrificing, and amiable, as to make it quite painful to leave him.

Probably some bodily anguish or physical irritation, none could appreciate or perceive, caused his bitter moods, and that his natural disposition peeped out in his intervals of freedom from pain. Certain it is that his daughter loved him as the truly unamiable and selfish never are and never can be loved, and that Lucilla Temple was so touched by his occasional acts and expressions of goodness, as quite to forgive his inconsiderate and petulant conduct in other instances.

When he returned with the young artist, his daughter, and Miss Temple to his own sitting-room, the latter, after taking off her bonnet and

cloak, took her knitting, the former his pencil, and Miss Trueblue, restless and anxious, moved about from window to window, watching Mr. Frederick Vernon Smirk, who was walking up and down before the door.

Old Mr. Trueblue soon fell fast asleep, the young artist stole Lucilla's hand, and Miss Trueblue left the room.

The lovers! they were alone; "but not alone as they who, shut in chambers, think it loneliness." No, though shut in this hot close chamber, with the dear blue sea, and the bright sky, and the glittering before their eyes, and the sea-birds wheeling round, and sails gliding by like sunny dreams—they did not think it 'loneliness.'

It was the happiest hour of their glad young lives, and the setting sun looked into eyes that swam in happy tears. And di Moricini said: "If I can bring you your father's blessing and your mother's consent to our union, will you be mine, oh, my Lucilla? Can you endure to share

the poor artist's struggle for competence?—can you limit your wishes to his humble lot?—can you subdue all prejudice against the foreign artist, and let your home be his home?"

"Yes," murmured Lucilla, and her head sank upon his shoulder.

In that moment she forgot all improbabilities, all impossibilities; the poorest cottage with that adored one seemed to her a fairy palace; she would not believe her parents could refuse him, and doom her to a broken heart. Oh, no! no! Hope shed her rosy light on the landscape of life, and before Miss Trueblue returned, and her father woke, Lucilla Temple was the affianced of her young heart's idol. Rash, thoughtless, inexperienced, what has she done? Can she after so clouded a morning brave a noon of storm and tempest— a night of starless gloom? And do not men and women of the world tell us that life is and must be such to the struggling children of poverty and gentle birth. Yet who could pity him? Who that saw her

bosom heaving with its wild and secret rapture, would believe that she was on the threshold of despair, and that misery and pining want were to be her portion? And yet there was not a match-making mamma, nor an husband-hunting daughter in all the crowded lodging-houses on the coast of Kent, who would not so have prophesied, so have decided, had they heard that “the beautiful Miss Temple,” already celebrated for charms, which were known to be her only dowry, had accepted the young half-foreign artist, whom, though scorning as a husband, they were not too proud to try to captivate as a lover, by peeping at him from under their ringlets, smiling, kissing their hands, and other similar *agaceries*.

But so it is; in their vulgar and interested envy, they had often decided that the beautiful Miss Temple was on the look out for a lord—that she “wouldn’t stoop to pick up nothing”—“that she would marry to her carriage,” and “make a market of herself”—and so on.

Could they see her joy-lit eyes, they would feel sure their prophecies were accomplished, else why that pride, that ill-suppressed delight? Alas! alas! poor Lucilla! thou art not like them, "of this earth earthy," nor is thy joy the joy of a daughter of this cold and scheming world.

CHAPTER XV.

There is something peculiarly affecting in any token of self-forgetfulness and consideration in an invalid habitually encroaching and selfish, and our young party felt this when Mr. True-blue, on awaking from his sleep, instead of as usual insisting on their remaining with him, proposed in the kindest and gentlest manner that they should adjourn to the library for an hour or two in the evening, to divert their minds a little from the contemplation of sickness, and, he added, he much feared selfishness.

What a useful lesson might this be to the old, the suffering, and indeed to all dependent on the kindness and care of others—the confinement they had always considered such a penance, they now looked upon as a privilege, and were as anxious to stay with the poor old invalid as they had formerly been to escape from him.

But he was positive, and so after much persuasion they agreed to adjourn to Sackett's library after dinner, for a little variety of scene and mental recreation.

Poor Tabitha, she had no doubt that in such a resort she should find him she loved, “not wisely, but too well”—the Adonis of Oxford street; and it was affecting to see how vainly she tried to dress herself to advantage—how many times she rearranged her thin hair, and changed her shawl for a scarf, and her scarf for a mantilla, and tried this coloured ribbon and then that, and at last, with swelling heart and

rising tears, put on her plain straw-bonnet, and least remarkable shawl.

Nor was Lucilla indifferent to her appearance on this evening, the first on which she went forth the affianced and the chosen of one she wildly loved. But lavish beauty rendered her task a pleasant one ; those abundant locks of silken gold so well repaid each touch of her trembling hand ; all colours suited that white-rose skin ; all fashions seemed adorned by that Psyche-form ; her little white lace bonnet, with its snowy roses, her clear muslin dress, and black lace scarf, seemed devised to set her off to the greatest possible advantage, and yet almost any other garb would have had the same effect.

At length, hurried by old Trueblue, they leave the hissing urn, the cheering tea and fragrant coffee—the warm, close room, with that medicated smell an invalid's retreat must have—and with hearts bounding, in the one with happy confidence in her power to please,

the other with anxious doubt and trembling fear, and perhaps even more passionate love, they go forth into that sweet autumnal evening sea-breeze which is an elixir to all, but most exquisitely so to the loving and the young.

The walk to the library seemed long and dreary to Miss Trueblue, who half dreaded she might see her adored one engaged in some deep flirtation with some gaudy beauty; but to our lovers it was one brief moment of rapture and wild delight.

The library was crowded and hot to suffocation, but they did not feel it so. In all directions gay ringlets, bright eyes, vulgar charms, gay polkas, light tunics, deep flounces, showy if not valuable ornaments, and scents, not choice, but overpowering. The raffle tables were thickly thronged, and the incessant managers, with their impassive gambler faces, court on hour after hour, burdening their souls with lies, swearing German and British plate were genuine silver, that ormolu snuff-boxes were

pure gold, and that articles, which would have been dear at fifteen shillings, were prizes at what they called four pounds ten.

And so great is the power of the tongue of another, even in defiance of the testimony of senses of one's own, that the raffles for palpable trumpery were filled up with eager speed, and men with moustachios, and grown women, threw the dice with trembling hands and beating hearts, and watched as if the stake had been a soul instead of an albata bauble. It was a marvel with what a variety of showy and useless nothings the glass cases of this dépôt of frippery were filled, and what wretched music people, under the excitement of this petty gambling, listened to with patience.

But the best description of such a scene is to be found in the Pocket-book of that popular and inexhaustible satirist 'Punch;' and to bring the scene before our readers, we cannot forbear quoting an appropriate fragment from

the sly old humourist's "Evenings at Ramsgate."

"There's a library built on the brow of a hill,
Or rather 'tis perched on the top of a rock ;
Old novels the shelves of its reading-room fill ;
Clocks, vases, etcetera, serve for its stock.
And though those old novels belong to the past,
The pliant subscribers keep reading them on ;
So those very old novels preserve to the last
All the value of new when their novelty's gone.

* * * * * * *

The room is lighted by a pound
Of goodly composition sixes ;
Upon the company around,
His eye the old librarian fixes.
He takes the dice-box in his hand,
The dice within he loudly rattles,
A sale he trusts thus to command
For many of his goods and chattles.
He looks towards a bright-eyed girl ;
What does his eager glance reveal ?
It bids the maiden give a twirl
To Fortune's ever-changing wheel.

She turns it with a nimble hand,
So fair and delicate her fingers,
That amid those who pass the stand
One captive youth beside her lingers.
He softly murmurs in her ear,
And she replies in accents thrilling ;
That gentle murmuring, I fear,
Has cost the captive youth a shilling.

* * * * *

But one there was, surpassing far
All others in that gay bazaar—
A creature fair, a creature young,
A creature such as poets sung,
When they described the fairest features
That graced the loveliest of creatures.
She was a thing of life and light,
That looked extremely well at night ;
Her well-macassared raven tresses
Hung o'er her whitened neck and shoulders,
Which the most low of low-necked dresses
Kindly revealed to all beholders.
The centres of her cheeks disclose
The deep vermillion of the rose,
While at the sides, that lovely girl
Wears the rich powder of the pearl,

Adding by its unequalled whiteness
Unto the deep vermilion's brightness.
Her eye-brows (truth 'twere vain to blink)
Are partly made of Indian ink ;
But oh, has India aught too rare
To lavish on a maid so fair ?
Her form would shame the sculptor's art ;
No stone, no chisel could impart
The beauty of that wasp-like waist,
Where that sweet girl is tightly laced ;
Her waist to sculpture all must own
Would only be a *waste* of stone.

* * * * * *

The opening bars of a popular air,
A beautiful ballad of feeling and grace,
Are played on a Broadwood piano—a square
With several notes out of tune in the bass ;
And there on the top of a kind of box—
A platform they term it—a maiden there sits,
Who gives the piano such violent knocks,
They threaten to break all the keys into bits.
She dreams she is dwelling in marble halls,
But carried away by the words she is saying,
So heavy her fist on the instrument falls,
She must dream on a marble piano she's playing.

In just such a scene, now raffling with assumed nonchalance, now flirting with impertinent freedom, as the girl at the wheel of fortune and the maiden at the piano—absurdly over-dressed and over-scented ; and in an assembly chiefly of caricatures, by far the greatest caricature of all, Miss Trueblue saw her handsome idol. Lucilla and her lover were too much taken up with each other to notice the almost tearful anxiety of Miss Trueblue, or the coxcomb-like airs of her Frederick, who deigned after a time to elbow his way to her side. In the universal bustle and hum their whispered conversation was unheeded. The chief purport of it was, that Frederick Vernon Smith, weary of even the semblance of work, and ashamed of his connexion with the Oxford street tailor, had at length, after many struggles, many tears, and a painful parting with the penniless girl of his heart, resolved to throw himself and his charms away on Miss Trueblue and her thousands. A ball was to take place the next evening at Mar-

gate, to which, in her father's present amiable and unselfish mood, she thought she should have no difficulty in inducing him to let her go with Lucilla and the young artist, chaperoned by a lady she had known slightly in London, and who was always ready for any public entertainment.

At this ball Miss Trueblue was to meet her Frederick ; he was to come to the hotel at which they were to sleep at Margate ; they were to be married the next morning—Miss Trueblue making sure Lucilla would act as bridesmaid. Frederick had the licence ready. Some excuse was to be made to old Trueblue for a visit to Canterbury, where the bride and bridegroom meant to spend their wedding-day, and then Mrs. Smirk was to return to her father, and on his health and temper it was to depend whether she owned her marriage and knelt before him with her bridegroom, or whether the marriage remained clandestine for some time longer.

The evening passed rapidly away. Lucilla

won some trifles, dear to her from their connexion with this delightful day. Miss Trueblue was in a wild tumult of joy and fear, love and duty struggling in her heart. The young artist was half wild with joy, and Frederick Vernon Smirk was trying to look like a victim, but only succeeded in looking like a fool.

Lucilla gladly agreed to the Margate ball—a ball with him! Oh, was she not too fully, richly blest? could this last? And her own dear parents, they must know it—they must approve; but it were best to let them see her beloved one—what were the use of writing! could any pen describe him? No, no, all must be concealed till she could lead him to their feet! and then all must be well. Ah, sanguine Lucilla! but at seventeen, who is not sanguine?

All that's bright must fade—and “the pound of goodly composition sixes” are all but extinct; our party “leave the gay, the glittering scene,” and come from the close, hot, garish room, and

are at once in the cool night sea-breeze, and face to face with the lady-moon. The moon ! she's looking in her glass, the sea. The stars are winking at her vanity. So enchanting a night is too great a temptation for our lovers ; and a proposal to take one turn on the pier is joyfully acceded to. Who can describe the rapture of such a walk at such an hour and beneath such a light, to those whose hearts beat beneath a delicious burden of yet unacknowledged love ?—love in his first sweet dawn—love when he seems to bathe the whole landscape of life in a sunny mist ! before doubts, and jealousies, and fears, his constant attendants, have had time to track the young God of love to the maiden's bosom, and before custom and ennui have brought their curse to the lover's heart.

Leaning on her affianced one's arm, Lucilla glides after Miss Trueblue, who has taken her Frederick's. At any other time the young artist might have objected to the attendance of

such an absurd vulgarian, but he hardly sees more than that Miss Trueblue has an escort, and that he can devote his very soul to Lucilla, whose hand flutters almost as wildly as the heart against which he has ventured to press it.

To record their conversation were difficult, and even, if effected, some Johnson would say, would it had been impossible. An ejaculation now and then, which spoke volumes to the heart—a sigh—a trembling smile—a fond glance at the moonlight in each other's eyes—a few monotonous and, alas ! egotistical sentences—a few incoherent exclamations—this was all ; but love is not eloquent, and lovers, if their discussions were accurately reported, would seem even to themselves sad fools.

One part of the pier was bathed in mysterious shadow, and one in no less mysterious light. Along the former, shrouded in the deepest gloom and wrapped in cloaks, walked two men, one very tall, the other of middling size ; they

were engaged in deep and earnest conversation ; the tone of the one was haughty and authoritative, that of the other humble and coaxing.

“ Well,” said the taller of the two, and Lucilla being close behind, the voice startled her ear and blanched her cheek—“ I can only say you’ve been of deuced little use to me as yet, Renard, in this chace, whatever you may have been in others. She may be in Ramsgate, but how am I to get at her if she never goes out alone ?”

“ Oh, trust to me, my Lord,” said the wily Renard ; “ within a week she’s yours. I assure you I had much ado to find out her retreat ; my sister got it out of her brother, and now I am here to help you, you’ll not be done, I promise you. I owe you many a service, and her dainty ladyship many a grudge ; but my time’s short here, for my sister’s Breach of Promise case takes up all my thoughts just now—so you must make short work of carrying her off.”

“ Ha, ha, ha !” laughed his Lordship, “ she’s fairly defied me, so I shall stand on no ceremony, Renny. Capital, Sir Felix’s wings being singed at last. Your sister’s a girl of spirit—it’s a plucky thing to do. I hope they’ll lay it on—ha, ha, ha !”

These words only came indistinctly and broken to Lucilla’s terrified ear, and had she not known the speakers and the circumstances, might have escaped her notice ; as it was, her own quickness supplied every link, and she thanked Providence for giving her this timely notice of the desperate villainy of Lord Trelawney and the viper-like enmity of the base Renard. But caution and anxious care for others were remarkable in Lucilla, young as she was, and however agitating the circumstances in which she might be placed. It struck her at once that a word of terror or a symptom of alarm might awaken her lover’s curiosity, and perhaps involve him, already engaged as she knew in a quarrel with Renard Undermine,

in some fatal conflict with the odious and terrible Trelawney.

Assuming then a composure she was far from feeling, she paused for a moment as if tired, and leaned against the parapet of the pier. Miss Trueblue and her lover had seated themselves on a stone bench. Lucilla saw Lord Trelawney and his companion pass them, and hasten on to the pier head—she then begged her lover to go to them, and tell them she felt poorly and weary and wished to get home.

They rose and returned home with her.

The young artist and Mr. Smirk left the ladies at their own door. Lucilla followed Miss Trueblue to the sitting-room, and closing the door told her all she had heard. Miss Trueblue grew pale with terror as she listened.

“I must leave this place, dearest, to-morrow,” said Lucilla, “and where shall I go—where can I be safe from such wretches?”

“We must outwit them,” said Miss Trueblue, whose own plans were dependent in a

great degree on Lucilla. "To-morrow morning after breakfast we will quietly remove to Margate, leaving an impression here that we are gone to Boulogne via Dover. Those wretches or their emissaries will be sure to inquire here, and will thus be put on a wrong scent. They will never dream of our being at Margate. And as our carriage may attract attention, we will, if you like, walk over to Margate early in the morning, leaving di Moricini to take papa a drive on the Dover Road, as a blind, and then bring him to us at Wright's Hotel. I will manage this, and while those wretches follow us to, as they think, Dover and perhaps to Boulogne we will enjoy ourselves at the Margate ball, and thus outwit that most cunning of pettifoggers, Renard Undermine!"

CHAPTER XVI.

All was arranged according to Miss Trueblue's plan. Early in the morning, long before Lord Trelawney and Renard Undermine, who, in their own language, had "made a night of it," had turned in their luxurious beds of down, Lucilla and Miss Trueblue had set off to walk to Margate, leaving a note for the young artist, with ample directions as to how he was to act.

As to old Trueblue, he continued in the same strangely amiable and touchingly comply-

ing mood, and readily and unenquiringly agreed to follow his daughter to Margate in the carriage under the escort of di Moricini. Lucilla and her friend set off in high spirits, full of love and hope, and not without a little feminine pride in outwitting the two dastards, who had made so sure of success in their base and cowardly schemes.

The morning was enchantingly bright and sunny, but so warm that the friends gladly availed themselves of the assistance of some long-eared, ill-fed sons of toil, grown stubborn from ill usage, namely, donkeys, with side-saddles, which surrounded by a crowd of clamorous, ragged boys, stood for hire at a corner of the road.

In less joyous spirits the excursion would have been a wearying one, but in their present mood our travellers found sources of mirth and jest in every discomfort. Miss Trueblue was decidedly the best mounted, and had the most energetic boy, and many were her boasts to

Lucilla of the speed of her *Rozinante*. As for Lucilla's, he had an incurable propensity to jam her feet up against every wall, bush, and hedge ; his pace was habitually that of a snail, but when beaten by the hallooing and relentless boy, he would kick in such a manner as nearly to throw his rider, and then set off at a sort of half trot, half canter, the most torturing, shaking, and alarming pace Lucilla had ever experienced in her life ; frequently her mental alarm and bodily pain forced from her a scream, which made Miss *Trueblue* look round in playful ridicule and triumph, as she cantered smoothly along enjoying her ride, and laughing at instead of pitying Lucilla's disasters.

“ How I wish I had such a donkey as that,” said Lucilla to the boy.

“ This here's the best,” said the boy, “ only he ain't in the mind to go ; and as for yer side-saddle, it's worth ten of hurn—she'll be off now afore you. Gee up, *Nelly* !”

Nelly, after receiving a blow, which she

answered with a kick, set off at a jolting trot, and Lucilla soon came along-side of Miss Trueblue.

“What a much better donkey yours is,” she said.

“Nay,” replied Miss Trueblue, laughing, “what a much better rider I am !”

She had scarcely spoken, when to Lucilla’s dismay, she saw her gradually disappear over the side of the donkey. A shriek from Miss Trueblue was followed by a laugh, and an assurance that she was not hurt. The old tattered girths of the saddle had given way, and Miss Trueblue’s boasts ended in a total defeat.

It was some time before the saddle was repaired, during which space the shaggy, dusty donkeys cropped what they could of grass and hedge, and so enamoured did the half-starved wretches become of their miserable fare, that when the friends were again mounted and *en*

route, no efforts of theirs or of their donkey boys could prevent their stopping at every opportunity to nibble a little more.

Seeing this, Lucilla and Miss Trueblue, when they reached the half-way house, plentifully regaled these wretched outcasts of the brute creation on corn and water, and treated the boys as liberally to bread and cheese and beer. Thus renovated, both donkeys and boys, and all in high good-humour, the ladies were rewarded by a painful but very efficient succession of trots and canters; and except that Lucilla was once pitched over her donkey's head, going up a hill, and that Miss Trueblue's once laid down with her in the dusty road, they reached Margate, with no injury but a few aches and pains, soiled garments, hands blistered from vain attempts at pulling in, voices hoarse from laughing and shrieking, and stitches in the side from terror and jolting.

At the entrance to Margate our friends dis-

missed their *montures*, and after a little smoothing and shaking themselves, walked quietly to Wright's hotel, where Miss Trueblue was well known and quickly accommodated with suitable apartments.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was the height of the season, and Margate was full to an overflow. Not of the aristocratic company which in the days of our mothers and grandmothers made it the watering-place *par excellence*; but, with the exception of a few respectable residents, and a few aristocratic visitors who valued the excellence of its bathing and the extreme salubrity of its air, and who were far above all plebeian fears of losing '*caste*,' it was crowded, thronged, nay choked with the gormandising porter and spirits and water

drinking sons and daughters of the ‘last.’ The city’s gaudiest and most flaunting dames and damsels, who bore on their persons traces at once of the wealth they had earned and of the smoky, unhealthy furnaces where they had earned it—while purple and portly husbands and fathers, care-worn, squalid, but overdressed young Londoners, with cigars and sand-shoes, and countless, dingy-looking, London children, made the jetty creak and groan beneath them—poisoned the air with snuff and cigars, and chattered, laughed, and shrieked with a new and intense delight. Every hotel, inn, ale-house, and eating-house of every description, was crowded to suffocation. The steam of brandy and water seemed the atmosphere all the London visitors delighted in; hecatombs of oysters, shoals of shrimps, myriads of plums and pears, for it was now the end of September, lakes of porter and of Bass’s pale ale, scarcely sufficed for the consumption of one day.

And many thousands under the pretence of

coming to Margate to enjoy ‘the sea air,’ shut themselves into close lodgings, eating and smoking from morning till night.

Miss Trueblue and Lucilla, from their drawing-room window, gazed with extreme curiosity on the many-coloured crowds on the quay before them; and thus occupied they found ample occupation for their time until Mr. Trueblue arrived, propped up by pillows and air-cushions, wrapped in shawls and Mackintoshes, in spite of the heat, and attended by di Moricini and Tucker, Miss Trueblue’s maid.

From this diplomatic and ready-witted person, whom nothing in the way of love or lovers escaped, Lucilla and Miss Trueblue learnt that inquiries had been made which were easily traced to Renard and Lord Trelawney; and Tucker, who by listening at the door, had become mistress of the facts of the case, had shown her waiting-maid skill in setting the

emissaries of the bold bad Trelawney on a wrong tack.

It was in a wild flutter of delight that Lucilla dressed for the ball to take place that night, at that once splendid, once justly named Royal Hotel, now scorned and deserted by the vulgar throng—a dilapidated monument to departed grandeur, inhabited only by the memories of the past.

Perhaps the hour in which she made her toilet for that ball was the very happiest of her brief career. She had just parted in hope and joy from her lover, and he had placed in her hand a packet, which proved on opening it to be a magazine, containing—oh, sweet surprise! oh, triumphant delight of dawning authorship! oh, unspeakable fascination of seeing one's first essay in print!—all the poems of which she had given him copies, with a most flattering and eloquent critique from the editor, and a letter which contained not only a most complimentary tribute to the young girl's powers, and a grati-

fying" request for further contributions, but a ten-pound note !

A ten-pound note ! thus earned by herself. The prospect of more such delightful gains—the consciousness that she had so available a mine which it was delightful to her to work—and the new and striking beauties the poems revealed to her own mind, in all the magic of a broad margin, a beautiful print, asterisks, italics, pauses, dashes, and notes of admiration ; oh, happy Lucilla ! a beautiful ball dress, a present from Miss Trueblue—and a set of pearls, a gift from poor old Trueblue—an exquisite bouquet from her lover—her fair and happy face reflected in the mirror—and boundless hope for the future, added to all the ecstacy of the present—that ten-pound note, which to the inexperienced girl, not yet eighteen, seemed sufficient to purchase all covetable things for herself and all dear to her—the approaching ball, to one to whom a ball was a delightful novelty, not an ever-recurring, half-exciting,

half-wearing bore—pondering on all her happiness, Lucilla sate, soft tears stealing over her cheeks, and her heart full of pious thankfulness to the Giver of all good, until Miss Trueblue came in, over-dressed, (poor fond one!) flushed and trembling to tell them the carriage was at the door.

How exquisite looked Lucilla in the eyes of her lover!—how manly and endearing did he seem to the fond girl! Old Trueblue, as they were leaving the room, called her to his arm-chair, and said, kissing her hand with a touching tenderness, “Be ever a sister to my Tabitha, and in my heart you will rank as a daughter. You are very beautiful, and there is but one lovelier in my eyes, my own child. You smile!—ah, you know how beautiful to a father’s heart is the face of an affectionate and dutiful daughter. Come here, my Tabitha; kiss your old father, and may God bless you. If it should please God to snatch me suddenly

from you, I wish you attentively to examine this pocket-book."

And he touched an old and very corpulent morocco letter-case, with worn straps and massive clasps, which he ever wore in his dressing-gown pocket.

Why did Tabitha Trueblue turn so pale? why did she sink on her knees, and bury her face in her father's lap? why did a choking sob forbid her utterance? Her gaudy lover is forgotten for a moment, and filial affection for a moment triumphs over love; but rising from her knees, and going for a moment to the window, she sees him, the Adonis of her heart, watching, his fine form shown off by a graceful attitude, his dark eyes raised, and his white teeth shining through his vermillion lips and beneath his jet black moustache; and then the father is forgotten, and hastily kissing his lemon-coloured cheek, she hurries Lucilla and her lover to the carriage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The ball-room of the deserted Royal Hotel is one of the most elegant, spacious, and delightful rooms in England.

It is little altered since those courtly days when Monsieur le Bas, master of the ceremonies, opened the ball with the lady of the highest rank in the room—days when reform was undreamt of and unneeded—when there was a broad line drawn between the classes—before railway trains bore everybody to every place, and machinery enabled all to dress so much alike—when the high-born and the wealthy

travelled in stately coaches and six—and Inns were important places—and none but gentlemen and ladies dressed as such—and tradespeople stayed at home, or were satisfied with a Sunday jaunt to Hampstead, or a holiday row to Greenwich.

The ball-room of the Royal Hotel, still left in *statu quo*, speaks of the Past, and those brighter days. There is the music gallery, whence issued once the “*menuet de la cour*,” the gavotes, the cotillions, and the sprightly country dances, ill exchanged for the questionable waltz, the inert quadrille, the romping gallop, and the awkward madcap polka. The richly carved festoons still ornament the walls with an antique grace ; white and wan they look like the ghosts of vanished flowers. In each oval and carved pannel is the mirror that once reflected the loveliness which now is dust. The chandelier, massive and handsome, speaks of those days of reality when glass was cut, not moulded—before paltry imitations made all things common.

And as our party entered the room, Lucilla was carried back for a moment to the times her mother had described to her, when ladies, plumed and jewelled, with short waists and long trains, stood opposite to beaux in black silk stockings, knee-breeches, and buckles ; and even to the time of her mother's mother, the belle of *her* day, with her powdered tête, her long taper waist, point ruffles, high heels, and dignified hoop, who in that very room had made a conquest of the Chesterfield of his day—and at the bottom of the longest of country dances, whispered behind her ample fan the gracious words that had coloured her destiny.

Now what a different scene ! True the master of the ceremonies was worthy of those graceful bye-gone days when *Etiquette* was Queen. He was a naval officer, of excellent family, courtly demeanour, and in his manners that happy mixture of cheerful benignity and gentle dignity which form the beau ideal of the English gentleman, and are all-important in the

peculiar and somewhat exposed position of master of the ceremonies. He knew how to make the humblest feel at ease, and yet his quick glance detected, and his dignified reserve promptly punished, the least approach to impertinence or impropriety. But it was a thankless office. The M. C. was worthy of Margate's best days ; the company, with some exceptions, namely, a few county families and aristocrats, there out of respect to the presiding genius, his high character and unremitting exertions to raise the standard of Margate society—were, alas ! of the most vulgar and *ormolu* cast ; and as lovers are generally early at a ball, eager to enjoy that “solitude” they find in a “crowd,” the master of the ceremonies was when they entered the room the only *gentleman* there.

The company, such as it was, was thin and scattered ; for the vulgar population of Margate, and the visitors from the London city, preferred the crowded, hot libraries, where *gratis* they

could squander their shillings, and indulge a sulky spirit of gambling, to the elegant arrangements made for their enjoyment, at a rate almost absurdly moderate, but which still they grudged by one who was in their own language —“ Too igh, and too much of a nob, to be the man for their money.”

Lucilla, as she looked upon him, felt that they were right, and though convinced that never had the quaint medal and the blue ribbon been worn with a more courteous grace, or on a more manly and gallant breast, she felt he was thrown away upon such a place, and was fitter for the Queen’s drawing-rooms than the Margate assembly.

It was not very long before Miss Trueblue espied her beloved, curled, oiled, scented, and tricked out in the extreme of gaudy taste, in imitation of some loftier fops; he carried a jewel-headed cane, and made frequent use of a showy eye-glass; many vulgarians watched him with an audible titter, half ridicule, half envy,

for he was beyond all comparison, in mere physical beauty, the handsomest person in the room. One sprightly city belle, famed for repartee, seeing that he had in his listless affection dropped his cane, while eyeing her through his glass, picked it up, and handing it to him, said: "I am very appy, sir, in this opportunity of giving you the cane"—a jest which all her admirers took, laughed at, and applauded to the echo.

Lucilla and her lover were soon engaged in a delightful waltz, and Miss Trueblue had at length yielded to her Frederick's entreaties and stood up with him. So many had been the requests for the honour of dancing with her, from men who knew who she was, and what she had, and so universal the court paid to her, that Frederick resolved to enforce a plan he had arranged, for carrying her off that very night. In order to effect this, he assumed a most passionate devotion of manner, pressed her corkscrew waist, and squeezed her trem-

bling hand, and then whispered into her delighted ear his love and his hope. Alas ! poor Tabitha ! she was not proof against this ; the post chaise was at the door, her lover's breath fanned her hair, his eyes scorched her heart ; her father, Lucilla, all were forgotten, and she whispered—"Yes."

"Yes"—on these words her Frederick acted ; he threw her shawl around, and in the confusion of the waltz he led or rather carried her to the door—she in a wild and guilty tumult of forgetfulness of all but love and him.

"The post-chaise is in waiting, dearest," he said, as they were about to leave the room, when a shriek from Miss Trueblue met his ear.

He looked up. There, like one wan from the grave, leaning on a staff, ghastly pale, and with working features, stood old Trueblue. Oh, horrible ! his hue grows more deadly, he tosses his arms aloft, his features work with a frightful emotion, he tries to speak, but an inhuman kind of gurgle is all he can produce.

His eyes roll, his lips foam, his tongue black and swollen protrudes, he falls headlong to the earth in a hideous apoplexy. A wild shriek startles the silent and arrested throng, and the undutiful daughter throws herself upon the lifeless form of the father, who had so loved her, and to whom she had been all on earth. Alas ! alas ! how has she requited him !

Lucilla and her lover bear the fainting daughter after the father's lifeless form ; but over the sacred anguish of that night we draw a veil.

CHAPTER XIX.

The secret of poor old Trueblue's change of conduct and feelings was now explained. Some inward mortification had succeeded as usual to acute and torturing inflammation ; he was in a state of comparative ease, and he felt in his own heart a conviction that release from suffering was at hand. Although, under the influence of acute and maddening pain, he had often been irritable and violent, his heart was kind, and his life had been comparatively pure and good.

When, therefore, he found himself relieved

from unbearable suffering, a meek and earnest repentance and an all-sufficient faith filled his heart, and its practical fruit was anxiety for the comfort and happiness of all whom he felt he had in his late trials treated with too little consideration ; he panted to atone. Poor old man, no suspicion or misgiving led him to the ball that night ; he went there thinking how delightful a surprise it would be to his child to see him once more in such a scene !

But when the first object that met his view was that adored and trusted child, so evidently eloping with the man he most despised and hated on earth—the man he had so forbidden her to hold any communion with, the shock was too great for his shattered and failing constitution, and a succession of fits closed his sad career.

Weep not for him—weep for that sad, remorseful, self-accusing daughter, who now looks upon herself as the murderer of her fond, confiding, idolizing father. Remorse is an awful

guest in any bosom, but in the feeling breast of one so truly good—one who had never felt his deadly presence in her heart before—one whose only fault was that feminine and touching one, the loving too well, and too trustingly, and too constantly—who *can* paint an anguish such as hers?

She could not tear herself, poor wretch! from the mortal remains of that devoted father! Kneeling by his corpse, her fevered head upon his cold unyielding bosom, his shroud bathed in her hot tears of ineffable anguish, of inconceivable agony, her lover forgotten as though he had never been—yes, forgotten, after one harrowing moment laden with the discovery of his falsehood and her father's just and yet parental source of constant opposition to her wishes and to his—and thus it came to pass that she was doomed to learn that she had deceived, and to her excited mind it seemed destroyed, her father for a mere fortune-hunter,

who loathed her person while he coveted her wealth.

When her father was what is commonly called laid out, and she, aided by the true and faithful friend of her heart, Lucilla Temple, was trying to nerve herself to gaze upon what had been her father, before entering his solemn room, the chamber of the dead, it flashed upon her mind that he had bade her examine the pocket-book he ever wore next his heart.

With many sobs and blinding tears, she opened it. An envelope, directed in old True-blue's hand, trembling and blotted, contained these words. "I charge my beloved child to read the enclosed, if that bad and heartless man, Frederick Vernon Smirk, still retains any hold on her affections. After its perusal she is free to act as her own dignity and conscience shall suggest; and she will now learn why her poor father, though he could not bear to wound her by an explanation, yet so opposed what seemed for her happiness. But if the man in

question has ceased to be dear to her, I charge her on my blessing to spare herself the pang of perusing the enclosed."

Even at that moment he was dear to her—very, very dear—for what woman who loves, does not turn in her anguish to him she loves for comfort and for hope?

With fevered hand she tore open the paper, and read with eyes whence the large tears welled, first a letter to her father, which ran thus:—

"Sir,

"As a friend of your family, I warn you that F. V. S. is still after your daughter, or rather her fortune. The enclosed has fallen into my hands, and will prove to you the nature of his views and feelings.

Your obedient servant,

"A LOOKER-ON."

The letter enclosed was from Mr. Smirk himself—it had no direction, but ran thus:—

“Necessity, my love, has no law. No man can live on nothing, and least of all a gentleman, with the Vernon blood in his veins ; and so little Humpy for ever, for she has the tin ; and yet I love you better than my own soul, and would rather live with you on £300 a year than with her on £10,000 ; but where is £300 or even £30 a year to come from, my beauty ? It’s a terrible cut up, after keeping company so long ; but want, and debt, and duns, drive me to anything, even to the arms of little Humpy. The worst of it is, she’s so confoundedly fond and all that. I enclose a sketch of my future bride—compare it with my picture of my Emma, and pity your miserable

FREDERICK.”

A vile caricature accompanied this odious, heartless note. For one moment a deadly faintness came over the wretched daughter ; Lucilla flew to her side ; silently she placed the letters in her friend’s hand, and in a hollow voice said,

“Read!” She then buried her face in her hands for some moments. Lucilla saw she was in prayer. At length a deep groan issued from her very heart; she murmured, “It is over! Thank God, I can bear it! the dream of a life has passed away, and I can yet forgive, and I say, may God forgive him!”

From that hour the fortune-hunter was nothing to the heiress; and when, after the funeral, he wrote and called, and wrote and called again, she merely enclosed that envelope, and said it would in itself be an all-sufficient reply to Mr. Smirk’s professions of affection and proposals of marriage.

CHAPTER XX.

While the unhappy daughter weeps and will not be comforted—while in order to convey her father's remains to their last home they are obliged forcibly to keep her from his lifeless form—while Lucilla tends and soothes her like a sister—let us inquire what has happened to the actors in this drama.

Di Moricini never leaves the retreat of the unhappy mourner, and is as earnest as his own Lucilla in the effort to comfort and to soothe. Old Trueblue's will has not yet been opened

because it is in the hands of a lawyer, who had been with the testator a few days before his death, but had crossed over to France.

Mr. and Mrs. Temple, always self-sacrificing, are ready to spare their daughter still longer to her sorrowing friend, much as they love her sweet company; and a visit from Lord Lofty, with hopes of an early presentation to an excellent living in a lovely part of the country, are owing entirely to a spirited letter Mrs. Temple wrote him, in which she enclosed Lady Lofty's note, and asked him whether it had been written with his knowledge and approval.

Tom was often and mysteriously absent, but what engrossed him is yet to be learnt; his father trusted his son was preparing him some classical surprise—his mother had her misgivings.

The Breach of Promise case engrossed public attention; but the Felix Park affair had been decided in favour of Sir Felix's nephew, who was said to be still abroad.

And Renard Undermine and Lord Trelawney—let us take a retrospective view of their proceedings. They have sustained a singular and absurd defeat, which, if known, and sooner or later all things *are* known, would make them the laughing-stock of the fashionable and professional world. They were too shrewd, keen, and practised in their own vile sport, the hunting down innocence and destroying virtue, to be put off the scent as easily as their simple opponents had expected they would be; not that they traced them to Wright's Hotel at Margate, but they learnt their intention of going to the ball, and a few minutes before old Trueblue's fit, they were in close and vicious discussion.

They had arranged a plan, the leading feature of which was, that just as Miss Temple was leaving the ball, a man was to come in haste and say that Mr. Temple had just arrived at the Rose Hotel, and wished to see his daughter immediately on business of vital importance—

that he had sent a carriage for that purpose, and to render the deception more complete, Renard, whose skill in copying handwriting was miraculous, and who had contrived to get from Tom a bread seal made from Mr. Temple's crest, wrote a few hurried lines, which none would have suspected, but least of all the inexperienced Lucilla.

Their object was to get her into a carriage, and convey her to some little distance, when Lord Trelawney was to present himself, and do his best to induce the wretched victim to listen to his cruel and insulting proposals.

All this was arranged with a skill worthy of Renard Undermine, and he and Lord Trelawney awaited the important hour of Lucilla's capture—the one his heart full of base vengeance, the other burning with as base a passion. Yes, there they sate after a gorgeous repast, sipping the iced claret and the fruity port, revelling in hot-house grapes, sunny peaches, and confectionary worthy of a mo-

narch's festival ; and this choice dessert they seasoned with ribald jokes, and cruel jests, and cowardly triumphs ; and Renard told over to himself Lucilla's slights, and repeated again and again the words—“ She shall pay for it—I said she should, and so she shall !”

“ I have watched her well,” he said ; “ she is in white, her long golden locks hang down her snowy neck, her head is shrouded in a black calash, and she has on a scarlet shawl ; thus equipped she has just stepped into the carriage. I have noted this, that Weasel may have no difficulty in giving her the note at once, when she comes out of the ball-room.”

Quite convinced that all was right, the plotters took their cigars, and their champagne punch, and awaited the hour of what they called triumph !

When the wretched Miss Trueblue rushed half frantic after those who were bearing away her father's lifeless body, Lucilla, thoughtless of self, darted after her, and thus like maniacs

they reached the hotel, where superior medical assistance to that obtained at the ball was promptly summoned.

In the meantime, the company at the ball, thinking that Mr. Trueblue's illness was merely a fit, and their wish being father to that thought, they, after a brief suspension of the evening's amusements, proceeded with their lively succession of waltzes, polkas, and quadrilles.

At length the ball was over, and the last damsel that lingered was a certain Miss of forty-five, who was at Margate on a matrimonial speculation, and who, her head being turned by novels and romances, fancied every man who looked at or was tolerably civil to her, meant to propose.

As cruel time had carried off her once abundant golden locks, she had substituted a wig, whose bright and silken ringlets hung over her whitened neck; her dress was simple white gauze, looped up with lilies of the valley. The evening had passed without her obtaining any

partner, save a boy or two, brought her out of sheer compassion by the amiable master of the ceremonies, and she had sustained a bitter disappointment in not meeting at this ball with a Mr. Thomas Tomkins, a banker's clerk, of whom she fancied she had made a conquest, and who imagining by her modish style of dress that she must be rich, had given her broad hints of an intention to elope with her.

When after the ball Miss Lydia Lovebond (for such was our spinster's name) repaired to the cloak room, she found that some unscrupulous person had carried off her cloak and hood, but in return our Lucilla's black silk calash and scarlet shawl were on a chair beside her.

“Well,” thought the lady, “exchange is no robbery, and this change is not for the worse.” And so she wrapped herself up in the handsome shawl, a present from Miss Trueblue, and hid her face and head in the calash, but from under its black flounce the golden ringlets hung

in glossy abundance, and, alas ! caused the catastrophe and mistake we have to record.

Weasel, who was on the look-out, watching the exequit of the company from the ball, no sooner saw, a damsel in white gauze, scarlet shawl, and black calash, than he made sure of his victim ; he placed the note in her hand ; she glanced at it, full of Mr. Thomas Tomkins, love, and wedlock. It ran thus :—

“ Dearest and best of children—come to me this moment, I have much to say to you, all is well at home, but do not delay.”

T. T.

“ A carriage awaits you—come at once.”

Miss Lydia Lovebond, convinced that this letter, meant for Lucilla, and pretending to be from her father, Mr. Thomas Temple, was from her admirer, Thomas Tomkins, without disclosing her face, said to Weasel—“ I am ready —take me to him at once !”

Weasel felt as if he had already clutched the fifty-pound note to be the reward of his suc-

cessful management of this affair—handed the spinster into the carriage, which set off at a rapid rate for Ramsgate. Here she was, still unresisting and at the summit of human bliss, smuggled by the dexterous Weasel into Lord Trelawney's yacht—and here his Lordship, wild with love and triumph, and attended by Renard Undermine, came on board.

When his Lordship sent a message craving admittance to the state cabin to behold his idol, she, rejoicing in the thought that her lover had turned out in true romance style to be a “Lord,” sent word that she pined to behold his Lordship.

“Come, Renard,” said Lord Trelawney, “this is the way your prudes always surrender at discretion; come, you shall witness our first meeting—it will be so capital!”

“You know the sex better than I do, my Lord!” said Renard; “I own I could not have believed this.”

And so they proceeded to the cabin, and

there on a couch, her face concealed, but her long golden locks sweeping the crimson velvet, lay Lydia Lovebond.

“ My darling, my gentle, my kindest girl,” said Lord Trelawney.

At these words—“ my Tomkins !” or rather “ my Lord !” shrieked Lydia Lovebond, and starting from the couch, she threw back her hood and disclosed a grim face, bright with rouge and pearl powder, and extended her lean long arms to clasp his Lordship to her bosom.

“ Confound it !” said Lord Trelawney, drawing back, “ what’s this ? why that cursed Weasel has made some infernal mistake.”

“ What a capital *coup de théâtre*, ” said Renard, laughing till he was almost in convulsions.

“ Alas, my Lord,” said Miss Lydia Lovebond, “ you are not the Tomkins of my early dream, but you are fair to look upon, and I find at this

moment that a woman's heart is indeed a transferable thing!"

"The deuce you do!" said Lord Trelawney, now laughing in his turn. "Well, Renard, if this is known, we shall be the laugh of the yacht-club, and I suspect a man who carries off such a prize as this will find the Isle of Thanet too hot to hold him; so we must go on our cruise after all and make the best of it. I say, my beautiful 'Delia,' are you willing to visit the Isles of Greece?"

"The Isles of Greece! the Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung," sighed the lady; "nothing would delight me more; but is it maidenly? You are not my Tomkins!"

"No, no, there's been a cursed mistake; I am not your Tomkins, and you are not my Lucilla, but to save you from scandal and ourselves from ridicule we must not return till we have made our projected voyage; so make yourself useful and agreeable, and when we

return I will add to your portion what will make you trebly welcome to your Tomkins."

"And my garb!" said Miss Lydia; "are white gauze and lilies of the valley raiment for a sea-voyage?"

"In that chest you will find attire provided for my inamorata, so equip yourself to your taste, and, Renard, order supper. Oh—

"The heart's like a tendril accustomed to rove,
And is sure to find something that's blissful and dear;
And if we are far from the lips that we love,
We have but to make love to the lips that are near."

"The supper will be ready in ten minutes, old girl," said his Lordship, lighting his Hooker. "I'm going on deck. Come, Renard! what a sell, but the coad won't do just yet!"

"I shall win him, I feel I shall, lovely and munificent but lawless corsair!" said the damsel, as she turned over some rich raiment meant for poor Lucilla. This amber satin robe and

crimson velvet polka, with this shawl turban, will become the unwilling captive of this lordly pirate. Alas ! alas ! why do I love him ? can I so easily forget my Tomkins ?”

So saying, the old fool awaited her summons to supper, where every luxury abounded, and champagne was drunk in tumblers, and where, having a tolerable voice and good ear, she was made to sing our ruffians to sleep.

When she retired to her own cabin, it was with a conviction that she was now indeed a heroine of romance, and should probably return, not to wed the vulgar Tomkins, but to lord it at Trelawney Hall—a loved, admired bride !

And thus were Lucilla Temple’s dangerous foes carried for a time away from her whose ruin they had so vowed to compass.

CHAPTER XXI.

The narrative of the next six months can be briefly told. Lord Lofty's interest secured to Mr. Temple the beautiful living of Lilydale worth a thousand a year, situated in the exquisitely picturesque village of Ashford in the county of ——. The Rectory was one of the loveliest spots in the world, with sloping woods, and feathering cedars, and yew and box trees cut into grotesque figures. The house, an old spacious Elizabethan mansion in grey stone, was a very temple of elegant comfort.

The furniture, suitable to the place, Lord Lofty bought at a valuation and presented to his cousin. And here the weeping, blushing Lucilla owned her love, and here her parents, now no longer poor, yielded a sad consent, for on that very day young Mr. Stanley had written to them, begging their permission to do his best to win their Lucilla's heart.

That morning's paper had brought a ludicrous account of the action for Breach of Promise, brought by Lucilla Undermine, spinster, against Sir Felix Archer, Bart., widower. Mr. Rory O'Brien had conducted the plaintiff's cause—Sergeant Ferret the defendant's. There was the usual amount of sarcasm and sophistry, of quibble and cross-examination, of legal punning, brow-beating, knocking down and summing up. But who will rush in like a fool where Dickens has deigned to tread ?

All London was, or tried to be, present ; the fashionable world, the professional and the literary, all were crazy to hear this famous trial

for Breach of Promise of Marriage. Sir Felix's luckless verses went sadly against him, and the plaintiff, robed almost in widow's weeds, and white from watching and fear of detection, won the jury's heart by the vivid contrast her counsel drew of what she had been and what she was. The witness of the maid who had peeped in when Sir Felix was kissing the plaintiff's hand —of Renard, who detected the ring on her finger—of the guests who noted his devotion to her at his own party—and above all, the clear evidence of Hebe Undermine, who *bona fide* believed she spoke the truth; but above all, Sir Felix's character for flirtation, and an adroit and complimentary appeal of O'Brien's to the jury, all middle-aged, on the power of men past forty over young girl's hearts; this and the Johnsonian lady's evidence, with her friends, decided the verdict and damages.

The Sergeant's defence, namely, that his client was courting another Lucilla through the medium of Lucilla Undermine, completely

damned his cause. The jury without any hesitation returned a verdict, damages £20,000.

Sir Felix, minus Felix Park and such a sum sped to Paris, where for six weeks he kept his bed.

Her parents having yielded a reluctant consent, insisting only on her giving herself her refusal and its reasons to their noble benefactor, young Stanley—the maiden sate, her heart wildly beating and her pale cheek bathed in tears, watching for her lover; her father and mother, sad and silent, were with her, and traces of tears told what it cost them to give her to a foreign artist, instead of bestowing her on their *beau ideal* of manly grace and goodness—Frank Stanley.

Tom, now possessed of a pony, and with Jock as his own tiger, had ridden out to meet his sister's lover. At length chariot wheels were heard; Lucilla grew faint, her mother's colour rose, her father's hand trembled as he laid it on her head, and said: “God bless thy

choice, my girl! it is at least a disinterested one!"

"Who is it?" asked the mother.

"Frank Stanley, I presume," said the father, "by the dark green chariot."

"Yes," said Lucilla, with a wan smile, "*he* has no chariot."

The library door is thrown open. Jock announces:—

"Mr. Frank Stanley."

"And Signor di Moricini."

The door is closed again—Lucilla scarcely dares look up, her parents rise to meet the stranger. One visitor alone stands there.

"Mr. Stanley, welcome!" cries Mr. Temple.

"Francesco!" exclaims Lucilla, rushing to meet him.

"The plot is unravelled—the secret is out," cried the lover, clasping her in his arms, and then kneeling with her before her now half-enlightened parents —

"Frank Stanley and Signor di Moricini are

one! Lucilla, I have won you as the poor half-foreign artist, know me now as one your parents can join with your own heart in advising you to bless."

Poor Temple! how he sobbed! Sweet Lucilla! how she blushed! And Mrs. Temple, how fondly she embraced her future son!

The wedding took place not long after in Mr. Temple's own church; he himself united his daughter to the man of his choice as well as hers. Many of the miserable poor of his wretched London district, now clean and good and happy, were placed in small cottages, where health enabled them to labour, and labour to live. Five hundred pounds left to Lucilla by old Trueblue purchased her *trousseau*, and on the eve of her wedding she received from Sir Felix at Paris a pompous offer of his hand. Too late! too late!

Miss Trueblue, broken in spirit and haunted by remorse, settled near the Temples, and found unspeakable solace in Mr. Temple's

spritual care. She nobly, on coming into her father's immense property, enabled the wretched Frederick to marry the Emma of his choice, by presenting him with £10,000, which, knowing his extravagant folly, she stipulated he should settle on his wife ; and then, convinced she had not long to live, a fact apparent to all, she made a will leaving her whole fortune to Lucilla, who thus is heiress to one of the finest fortunes in England.

As for Lord Trelawney, a brain fever, caused by rage and disappointment, ended his mad career in Greece, where, possessed of his yacht and all his valuables, Miss Lovebond married a Greek pirate.

Poor Abel Watchful did not long survive his master, and the heir-at-law came in for all the well-hoarded heir looms of that noble family.

After the happy ceremony had taken place at Lilydale, the bride and bridegroom set off for Paris, and among the many blessings showered

on them, none were more hearty than those of poor Norah, who, sobbing and laughing, alternately cried: “God bless you both, mavourneens; the holy Virgin have you in keeping, and make ye as good in prosperity as ye were in adversity, Miss Lucilla—begging your pardon, Mistress Stanley, my jewel—for both have their thrials, and ye’ve thriumphed in one state, and now we’ll see how ye’ll thrive in the other; God bless the purty faces of ye both—ye juice of my heart. Och hone, and what’s Masther Tom afther with that son of a gun, that big pistol?”

That pistol, so long the object of Tom’s ambition, the priming, cleaning, and letting off of which with Jock had been his private pursuit so long, was now formally presented to the wedded pair to protect them in the perils of travel.

It was gladly and graciously accepted, Lucilla thinking it much safer in her husband’s keeping than in Tom’s; but all felt it was,

coming from Tom, as the gift of his right hand.

They are gone on their glad career—they have set out together on that journey they must share till they reach the gates of death, or rather the portals of eternity. A blessing on them for their faithful love! We have not sought to conceal their faults—they are not perfect; but to them much is forgiven because they loved much.

In Paris they saw Sir Felix Archer and the Temples of Temple Grove; he was sneering, cold, and bitter, and so fearful did he become that his more than ever hateful nephew, and the now detested Lucilla, should come eventually into possession of Archer court and the house in Portland Place, that he suddenly proposed to the only woman who ever really loved him, Hebe Temple; and before our newly married pair left Paris, Sir Felix had made poor Hebe, Lady Temple.

And Renard Undermine, he too was in Paris,

on a visit to his sister Lucilla, now Mrs. Rory O'Brien.

One day walking in the Tuilleries, Lucilla and her husband found themselves close behind a party consisting of a young man, a middle-aged lady, and some lovely children. Lucilla pointed the beauty of the little ones, one of whom had long silken locks of pale gold, reaching to her waist.

The lady called to this child, who lingered a little behind, playing with a young lordling in tartan.

“Come, Lady Cis!—come.”

“Don’t go,” said the boy, “don’t go, Cis; we never mind our governess.”

“Oh, but,” said the little lady, “Miss Trevor is so cross!”

“Are you coming, Lady Cis?” cried Miss Trevor, “Do go, Renard, and carry her, little obstinate thing!”

Renard snatched up the child and said: “Come, Lady Cis, there’s a dear—come!”

At this moment he perceived Lucilla and her husband, in whom he recognised the terrible Di Moricini. He saw that Lucilla fathomed his tale of Lady 'Cis' and the Hon. Miss Trevor. He feared Di Moricini's vengeance, though he had sent him the basest of apologies, and so setting down the screaming, kicking Lady Cis, he fairly took to his heels and fled.

Lucilla and her husband laughed, and Miss Trevor indignantly bridled up and hastened after the fugitive.

In this same walk they met a woman, care-worn, pale, and alone—alone in this gay scene, and yet with orange flowers in her bonnet—a bride, and all alone!

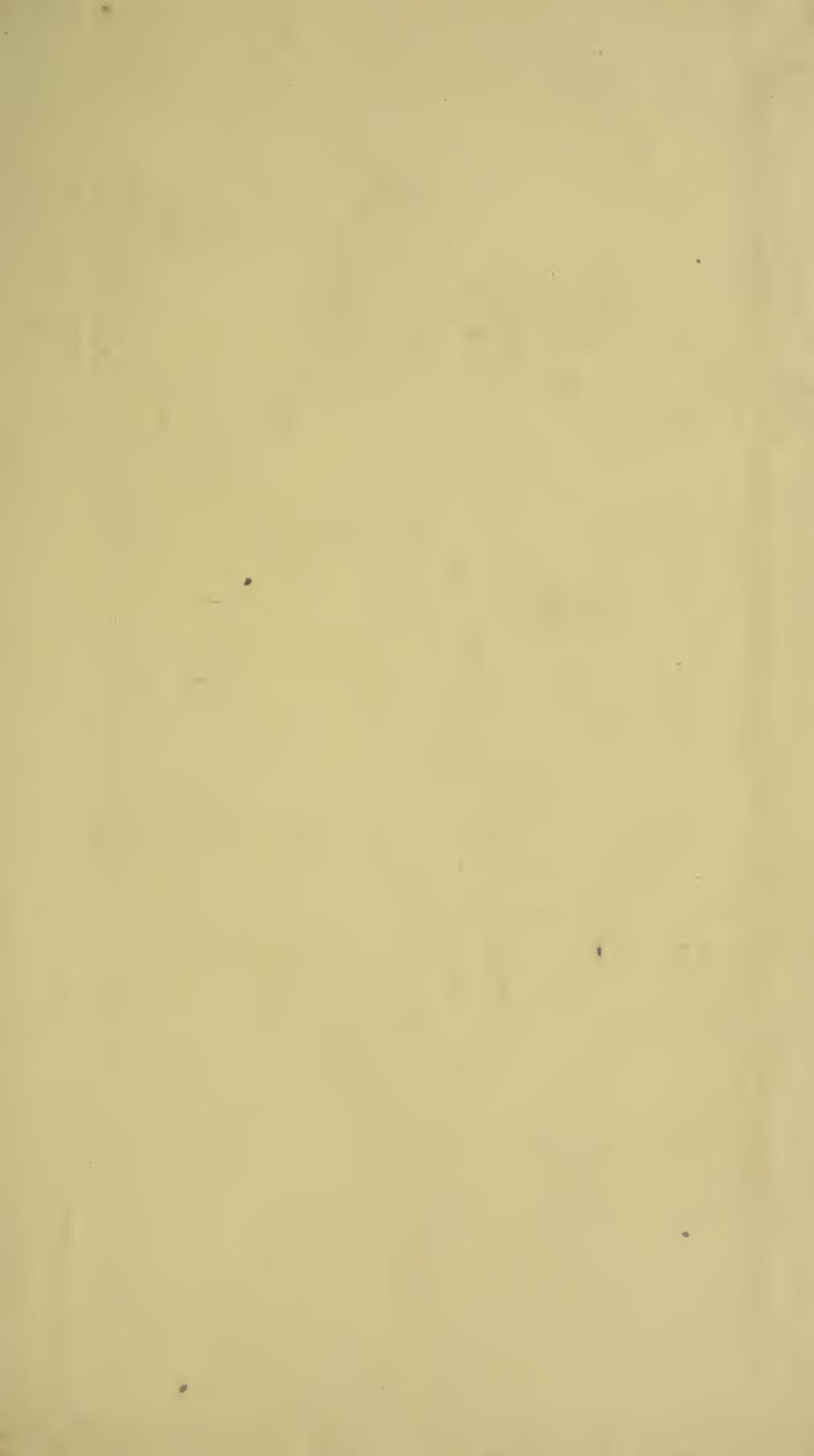
It was the once joyous Lucilla Undermine, now Mrs. Rory O'Brien. She slunk away when she saw Lucilla. The punishment of perjury had fallen promptly and heavily on her!

With the heavy damages of her false and perjured suit she had bought herself a husband, namely Rory O'Brien, and she found too in him her punishment and retributive curse.

A liar, a gambler, and a most passionate and violent brute—a drunkard and a profligate—she secured to herself with the wages of falsehood and perjury. Poor wretch! she is amply punished; loving the ruffian too well to leave him, her fortune all at his disposal, for she had eloped with him on its receipt—likely to be the mother of a villain's child—at variance with her family for her foolish and rash marriage—she pines away with a broken spirit, and is already only the wretched shadow of her who was once the belle of Bedford Row, and the toast of Lincoln's Inn! Lucilla found out her abode, and tried to comfort her; but there was no comfort for her, and she lived to curse in actual poverty and bitterness of spirit the wretched day when first she engaged in so

base a plot, to see that she had sold herself to sin and shame for £20,000, and to weep for ever the luckless hour when first she commenced in folly and in sin an action for “BREACH OF PROMISE.”

END OF THIRD VOLUME.



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